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LETTERS

ON

EGYPT,

CONTAINING,

A Parallel between the Manners of its ancient and modern Inhabitants, its Commerce, Agriculture, Government and Religion;

WITH

The Deſcent of Louis IX. at DAMIETTA,

EXTRACTED FROM

JOINVILLE, AND *ARABIAN AUTHORS.*

TRANSLATED

From the FRENCH of M. SAVARY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

SECOND EDITION.

VOL. II.

LONDON;

PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

MDCCLXXXVII.

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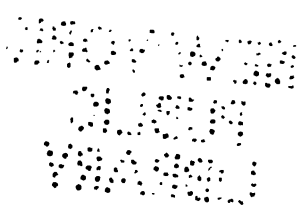

LETTERS ON EGYPT.

LETTER I.

THE ROUTE FROM ACHMIM TO DENDERA.

Souadi deſcribed, on the eaſt of which are two ancient monaſteries, ſurrounded by the ruins which denote the ſcite of Crocodilopolis. Obſervations on Menchia, and the ancient Ptolemais of Hermes, the ruins of which are not far diſtant; with the ſtate of the neighbouring country. Remarks on Girga, the capital of Upper Egypt, and on Abydus, which ſtands to the weſt. The famous temple of Oſiris, into which ſingers and muſicians were forbidden to enter, is at this place. Remarks on Farchout, and its delightful orchards. The ruins of Tentyra, near Dendera, and the hatred of its ancient inhabitants to crocodiles.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo, 1779.

LEAVE we the town of Achmim, and the ſerpent Haridi, and let us croſs the Nile;

where we ſhall ſee the little town of Souadi, governed by a Cachef. Proceeding weſtward we find two Coptic monaſteries, at the entrance of the deſert. Their churches are ornamented by Corinthian columns, with a croſs in the center of the capital, and paved with red granite, in which numerous hieroglyphics are ſculptured. Their architecture betokens the decay of taſte among the Greeks, and they are ſuppoſed to have been built by the Empreſs Helena. Various antique marbles are ſcattered over the ſpace that divides them, which indicate the ſcite of Crocodilopolis *(y)*. This city was diſtant from the river, and Ptolemy places it near Aphroditopolis, or the city of Venus.

Turning to the ſouth eaſt, we croſs a plain ſhaded by various trees, abounding in corn, and interſected by rivulets. This leads to the little town of Menchia, which has a large moſque, and a conſiderable market. The Bazars are provided with commodities of all kinds, and a conſerve of wheat is to be had here, much eſteemed in

(y) Ptolemy, l. 4. This is a ſecond city of that name; the firſt ſtood near Fayoum, and was better known by the name of Arſinoe.

this country, made from wheat ſteeped two days in water, dried afterwards in the ſun, and then boiled to the thickneſs of a jelly: thus prepared it is called Elneda, dew, and is melting, ſweet, and very nutritive. If this kind of conſerve, dried in an oven, would keep at ſea, it might be of great uſe in long voyages.

South of Menchia, on an eminence, ruins of entablatures, cornices, and ſhafts of columns are ſeen. Here there is a quay, beſide the river, and a projecting mole preſerves the veſſels from the winds and waves. Theſe ruins, and ancient works, recal to mind the great Ptolemais which Strabo compares to Memphis for extent and population *(z)*. Ptolemy names it Ptolemais of Hermes, becauſe Mercury the ſymbolical deity was worſhipped there *(a)*.

Now, while the wind is driving us ſouthward, let us look before us to the rocks which riſe on the eaſtern coaſt, and we ſhall perceive the ſmall convent *Der Hadid*, ſituated in the midſt of the deſert, ſurrounded by ſterile clifts, and caverns which the zeal

(z) Strabo, lib. 17.——*(a)* Ptolemy, lib. 4.

of the primitive chriſtians peopled with pious anchorets. Can there be a more frightful wilderneſs near ſo enchanting a country? On one ſide nothing can be ſeen but barren ſands and parched mountains, from which the reverberated heat of the ſun is ſuffocating. Turn to the other, and we there admire the copious treaſures of abundance. The Dourra, with reedy leaf and ſwelling ears, ſhoots up its vigorous ſtalk; the waving corn is ready for the ſickle; vaſt fields of ſugar-canes and flax flouriſh beſide each other; the redneſs of the date-tree betokens ripeneſs; the palm of the Thebais ſpreads its fan leaves, and the garden melon grows pendant over the river banks. Such is the aſpect of theſe plains now, and it is the beginning of December.

We are drawing near to the port of Girga, the capital of Upper Egypt. This city is a league in circumference, contains ſeveral moſques, baſars, and ſquares, but no marble buildings; well cultivated gardens ſurround it; a Bey is the governor, whoſe ſoldiers commit innumerable oppreſſions. The Copts are not allowed to have a church here, but are obliged to perform their religious duties

duties in a convent built on the other ſide of the Nile. Girga affords no veſtiges of ancient edifices, but appears to be a modern built town, for it is not mentioned by Abulfeda.

After an hour's walk eaſtward, we come to the ruins of Abydus, where Iſmandes built a magnificent temple, in honour of Oſiris, the only one in Egypt into which muſicians and ſingers were denied entrance. Reduced to a village, under the reign of Auguſtus, this town at preſent contains only heaps of ruins, without inhabitants, but to the weſt of theſe ruins we ſtill find the above-mentioned temple built by Iſmandes *(b)*.

The entrance is under a portico, ſixty feet high, ſupported by two rows of large columns. In this maſſy marble building, and the hieroglyphics with which it abounds, we diſcover the work of the ancient Egyptians. Beyond is a temple, three hundred feet in length, and one hundred and forty five wide. At the entrance is an immenſe

(*b*) Strabo, lib. 17. calls him Iſmandes, and Memnon, and ſays this is the ſame monarch who built the Labyrinth.

hall containing eight-and-twenty columns, ſixty feet high, and nineteen in circumference at the baſe; they ſtand each twelve feet aſunder. The enormous ſtones of the cieling are ſo perfectly joined, and inſerted one in the other, as to appear, to the eye, one ſole marble ſlab, one hundred and twenty-ſix feet in length, and ſixty-ſix in breadth. The walls are loaded with innumerable hieroglyphics, among which are a multitude of animals, birds, and human figures wearing pointed caps *(c)*, with a piece of pendant ſtuff behind, and cloathed in open robes which do not deſcend below the waiſt. The rudeneſs of the ſculpture beſpeaks antiquity, and art in its infancy. The forms, attitudes, and proportions are all bad. Among theſe various groups, we perceive women ſuckling their children, and men preſenting offerings to them. The traveller, likewiſe, recognizes among the deſigns engraved on the marble, the divinities of India. M. Chevalier, Governor of Chandernagore, who lived thirty years in the Eaſt, where he rendered very eſſential ſervice to his country, examined this antient monument very carefully, on

(c) Theſe caps are ſtill worn by the Egyptian prieſts on feſtivals.

his

his return from Bengal, and remarked the gods *Jaggrenat*, *Gonez*, and *Vichnou*, ſuch as they are repreſented in the temples of Indoſtan. Have the Egyptians received theſe deities from the Indians, or the Indians from the Egyptians? Were that queſtion anſwered, it might decide the antiquity of the two people.

At the farther end of the firſt hall is the great door, which leads to an apartment forty-ſix feet long and twenty-two wide. Six ſquare pillars ſupport the cieling, and four doors, at the corners, lead to four other chambers, to which, however, the heaps of rubbiſh forbid all entrance. The laſt hall, ſixty-four feet long, and twenty-four wide, contains ſtair-caſes leading to the ſubterranean parts of this grand edifice. The Arabs, ſearching for hidden treaſure, have heaped earth and ruins on each other. In thoſe parts into which it was poſſible to penetrate, we find ſculptures and hieroglyphics ſimilar to thoſe above ground. The natives aſſert the apartments are the ſame, and that the depth of the columns below the earth equals their height. It might be dangerous to deſcend too far into theſe vaults; the air is infected,

and ſo loaded with mephitic vapours that it is difficult to keep a candle lighted.

Six lions heads, on two ſides of the temple, ſerve as water-ſpouts. A very ſingular ſtair-caſe leads to the ſummit of the building; it is formed by the ſtones being inſerted in the wall, from which they project ſix feet; ſo that, being only ſuſtained on one ſide, they appear ſuſpended in the air. Neither the walls, roof, nor columns of this edifice, are injured by time; and, did not the hieroglyphics, which are defaced in many places, ſhew marks of age, it would ſeem as if newly built. Such is its ſolidity, it will ſtand for ages, unleſs purpoſely deſtroyed. The coloſſal figures, the heads of which ſerve as ornaments to the capitals of the columns, are in baſſo relievo; but all the remaining hieroglyphics within the temple are cut into the ſtone.

On the left of this great building there is a ſmaller one, at the farther end of which ſtands a kind of altar. This appears to have been the ſanctuary of the temple of Oſiris. I obſerved before, Sir, that entrance was forbidden to ſingers and dancers. The Egyptian prieſts invented ſeven vowels, to

each of which they affixed a ſound, like the notes of our gamut *(d)*; and, that they might preſerve this invention, they repeated, at ſtated times, theſe vowels in the form of a hymn, the ſucceſſive tones and modulations of which produced an agreeable melody. This, no doubt, was the reaſon they excluded all inſtruments of muſic from the temple; and to theſe were the Greeks indebted in the compoſition of their language; which was ſo muſical, and perfectly accented, as that a diſcourſe, well delivered, was a pleaſing recitative. Piccini, Gluck, and Sacchini, have taught us to admire the grating tones of the French language, by their learned and harmonious modulation; what then would they have done with theſe ancient tongues? Let us no longer be aſtoniſhed at the marvellous effects which are related concerning the muſic of the Greeks; for they poſſeſſed all the treaſures of melody, all the riches of an imitative language, and ſpoke, at once, to the ear, the underſtanding, and the heart. It is now time to quit

(d) Plutarch. *De Iſide et Oſiride**.

* We remember no ſuch paſſage, nor on a ſlight reviſion, can we find any ſuch in the above cited treatiſe. It is perhaps an error of copying, or printing. *T.*

the

the antique temple of Iſmandes, beſide which, according to Strabo, there was a foreſt of the Acacia, conſecrated to Apollo, and of which there are ſome remains, towards Farchout.

The Turkiſh government from Girga to Syene is by no means well eſtabliſhed; moſt of the lands are poſſeſſed by independent Arabs. Thoſe who inhabit the mountains, to the eaſt of Girga, pay no tribute, but grant an aſylum to all malecontents; nay, often embrace their cauſe, and furniſh them with arms to re-enter Grand Cairo.

The iſland of Doum is not far diſtant from Girga *(e)*, and above ſtands the port of Bardis, a ſmall town dependent on the Grand Sheik. The government of this prince is very extenſive, and his uſual reſidence is Farchout, beſide which runs an arm of the Nile. He owns a vaſt incloſure here, in which are planted palms, dates, vines, orange trees, acacia, nabech, and the Arabian jaſmine. Tufts of baſil, and cluſters of roſe buſhes, are ſcattered here and there among theſe trees, which, though planted

(e) Doum is the name which the Arabs give to the fan-leaved palm tree.

without

without either deſign or taſte, afford moſt delightful ſhades. Were nature and art combined, charming gardens might be formed, at a ſmall expence; for this happy climate poſſeſſes a fruitful ſoil, water in abundance, the moſt odoriferous ſhrubs, and a ſky the moſt ſerene.

The village of Beliana is alſo dependant on the Grand Sheik, and ſituated between two canals, which render it a moſt agreeable abode. Facing it are ſome hamlets, inhabited by Arabs, who infeſt the river with their piracies, eſpecially during night. Paſſing the arm of the Nile which goes to Farchout, we come to Badjoura, whence we ſee an agreeable iſland, and have a diſtant proſpect of the village of Attarif. The town of Hau, built on an eminence, overlooks the country to the weſt; and hides the ruins of Dioſpolis Parva *(f)*, the little city of Jupiter. The Egyptians had ſecured this city from the inundation by their labours, which advantage Hau likewiſe enjoys. It riſes like an iſland, while the plains are overflowed

(f) Strabo, lib. 17. Ptolemy, lib. 4. place Dioſpolis Parva, between Abydus and Tentyra, on a height, a ſituation which perfectly agrees with the town of Hau.

with

with water. The inhabitants of Badjoura, and the neighbouring hamlets, inter their dead there.

The rocks diverge from the eaſtern ſhore of the Nile, near the villages of Caſr and Fau; the firſt was formerly the town of which Abulfeda gives the following deſcription: "Caſr is a day's journey ſouth of "Cous, on the eaſt ſide of the river. The "neighbouring country abounds in corn and "palm trees. A great number of earthen "veſſels are made there, and diſperſed over "the reſt of Egypt *(g)*." Since the time of Abulfeda, the town of Caſr has loſt the greateſt part of its trade and inhabitants, and is now only a village of ſmall importance.

The weſtern ſhore of the Nile, better peopled, affords a more ſmiling proſpect, of date tree groves, *doum*, diſperſed around the houſes, rich plains of wheat, and paſturage covered by flocks. The ſmall town of Dendera contains nothing remarkable; but about a league to the weſt are the remains of the ancient Tentyra. Heaps of rubbiſh, and

(g) Abulfeda, Deſcription of Egypt.

extenſive

extenſive ruins, indicate the grandeur of this city, the inhabitants of which, according to Strabo, worſhipped Iſis and Venus *(b)*. Among theſe ruins, on a ſmall eminence, are two ancient temples, worthy of admiration. The largeſt only two hundred feet long, and one hundred and forty in breadth, is ſurrounded by a double frize. It is divided into ſeveral lofty apartments, ſupported by large columns, which have a ſquare ſtone for their capital, on which is ſculptured the head of Iſis. Hieroglyphics, in compartments, cover the walls. Coloſſal figures ſtand at the outward angles, and ten flights of ſteps lead to the ſummit of the temple.

The ſecond, ſtanding on the right, is ſmaller. The cornice, which is carried round it, and the gate, are decorated by falcons, with ſpreading wings. A doubled ſquare ſtone ſerves as a capital to columns which ſupport the roof. On the walls, various rows of figures, of men, birds, and animals, are ſculptured. Theſe hierogly-

(b) Strabo, lib. 17.

phics

phics were the hiſtory of the times. Could we read them, we ſhould probably know whether theſe were temples dedicated to Iſis or Venus. The ſame ſolidity may be remarked here as in thoſe of Abydus, but leſs grandeur and magnificence.

Before I conclude my letter, I will quote what Strabo ſays concerning the averſion in which the Tentyrites held the crocodile, a reptile revered in many other cities. "The "inhabitants of Tentyra abhor the croco- "dile, and wage continual war againſt him, "as the moſt dangerous of animals. Other "men, thinking him the moſt pernicious, "avoid him; the Tentyrites, on the con- "trary, eagerly hunt for and kill him, "wherever they can find him. The Pſylli "of Cyrene are known to poſſeſs a certain "power over ſerpents, and it is commonly "thought the Tentyrites are endowed with "the like virtue over crocodiles. They "plunge and ſwim audaciouſly into the "middle of the Nile, without receiving "harm. During the ſhows exhibited at "Rome, ſeveral crocodiles were put into a "baſon, on one ſide of which was an open-

"ing

" ing for them to ſwim out. Into this ba-
" ſon the Tentyrites threw themſelves a-
" mong theſe monſters, took and drew them
" forth in a net. After expoſing them to
" be ſeen by the Roman people, they once
" more intrepidly ſeized and brought them
" back *(i)*." A fact thus atteſted by a judicious hiſtorian, who was himſelf an eye witneſs, cannot be doubted. Do not the natives of the Caribbe iſlands, armed only with a knife, advantageouſly combat the ſhark, one of the moſt dreadful of ſea monſters? There ſtill are found determined men in Egypt, who dare attack the crocodile. They ſwim towards him, and, as he opens his formidable jaws to ſwallow them up, they thruſt in a plank of fir, to which a rope is tied. The crocodile, by cloſing his jaws forcibly, indents his ſharp teeth ſo far into the wood as to be unable to draw them out; the Egyptian ſwims to ſhore with his rope; after which ſeveral men draw on ſhore and kill the monſter. This is not performed without danger, for ſhould the

(i) Strabo, lib. 17.

ſwimmer

ſwimmer fail in his attempt, he is inſtantly devoured. I have never myſelf been a witneſs of this dangerous ſport; but many people in Grand Cairo have aſſured me the thing is true.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER II.

GIENA, COPHTOS, COUS, AND THE ROUTE TO COSSEIR, ON THE RED SEA, DESCRIBED.

Cophtos, Cous, and Giena, in ſucceſſive poſſeſſion of the trade of the Red Sea. Labours of the Ptolemies to protect, and preſent ſtate of, that trade. Deſcription of the route from Giena to Coſſeir, a ſmall town and harbour, but with a good road. Precautions neceſſary in croſſing the deſert. Means of rendering the road ſafer, and the advantages which would thence reſult.

Grand Cairo.

FROM Dendera, Sir, Giena is ſeen upon an eminence. The ancients, who called it Cœnœ *(k)*, do not ſpeak of any remarkable building it contained, nor is its preſent ſtate more flouriſhing, although become the rendezvous of the caravans that go to Coſſeir.

(*k*) Ptolemy, lib. 4. calls it Cœnœ, or the new town.

A canal runs beſide it, which formerly was navigable, but, neglected by the Turks, is always dry, except during the time of the inundation. Though Giena contains no remarkable edifices, its environs well deſerve the attention of travellers. They are laid out in gardens, which produce excellent oranges, dates, lemons, and exquiſite melons; and the cluſtering trees form arbours and ſhades, the convenience of which are forcibly felt under this burning ſky.

Above Giena are the ruins of Cophtos *(l)*, which city, having been built on an height, and ſurrounded by the waters of the Nile, was conveniently ſituated for the trade of the Red Sea. Strabo *(m)* thus deſcribes it: "A canal, cut from the Nile, runs to "Cophtos, which is inhabited by Egyp-"tians and Arabs. Ptolemy Philadelphus "was the firſt who made a road between "this city and Berenice, acroſs the deſert "without water, where he built public edi-"fices, in which travellers, foot and horſe,

(*l*) The Arabs, having no p in their language, uſe the b, inſtead, and call it Cobt.

(*m*) Strabo, lib. 17.

"might

" might find accommodations. The danger " of navigating the farther and narrow part " of the Red Sea occaſioned him to execute " this work, the conſequent advantages of " which demonſtrate its utility. The pro- " ductions of Arabia, India, and Ethiopia, " were ſoon brought over the Arabian Gulph " to Cophtos, which city is ſtill the ſtore- " houſe of the merchants of the Eaſt. They " no longer unladed at Berenice, where the " coaſt is ſhallow and unſafe, but at the port " of the Rat *(n)*, which is not far diſtant, " and where ſhipping is kept; formerly " this road was travelled by night, on ca- " mels, and travellers ſteered their courſe, " like mariners, by obſerving the ſtars; they

 " were

(*n*) Thus called by the Greeks and Romans, becauſe it is very ſmall. The Arabic name, Coſſeir, ſmall, preſerves the meaning of its ancient title. This paſſage wants explanation. Strabo places Berenice at ſome diſtance from the port of the Rat, now Coſſeir; Ptolemy and Pliny under the tropic, that is fifty leagues more to the ſouth. It muſt therefore have been eleven or twelve days journey, at leaſt, between Cophtos and Berenice. Strabo only calls it ſeven. This hiſtorian, who never performed the journey, but contented himſelf with ſuch information as he could obtain, at a time when the ancient road was no longer travelled, muſt certainly have been deceived. Conſult.

" were alſo obliged to provide themſelves " with proviſions and water ſufficient for ſix " or ſeven days journey; but at preſent they " obtain water from deep wells and ciſterns " conſtructed for that purpoſe. Mines of " emeralds are found in the iſthmus they " croſs, and other precious ſtones, which " the Arabs ſearch after."

The riches Cophtos acquired from its Indian commerce, rendered it exceedingly flouriſhing; the city became celebrated, and its proſperity continued till the time of Diocleſian. The inhabitants having embraced Chriſtianity at that period, being perſecuted by the Emperor, revolted; he ſent an army to quell them, and their city was entirely raſed. In the time of Abulfeda, its ſplendour was gone, and nothing remained but a ſmall place built among the ruins of the former city. At preſent, the inabitants have wholly deſerted it, and have retired to a village a mile diſtant, which they have named

ſult the moſt learned geographers, and there can be no doubt but that Berenice was ſituated on the borders of the Red Sea, and under the parallel of Syene. Father Sicard, and various other travellers, have ſuppoſed Coſſeir was the ancient Berenice. They were miſtaken.

Cobt.

Cobt. The marbles and noble fragments ſcattered among the ſands, which cover the ſcite of the ancient Cophtos, atteſt the barbariſm of Dioclefian. The great baſon, which was the ancient harbour, ſtill ſubſiſts, with two bridges thrown over canals which run by its ſide.

Cous, formerly the city of Apollo, was enriched by the deſtruction of Cophtos, whoſe merchants, eſtabliſhing themſelves there, cauſed commerce long to flouriſh, as we are informed by Abulfeda *(o)*. "Cous, "ſituated on the eaſtern bank of the Nile, is "the largeſt city in Egypt, except Foſtat; "and the ſtorehouſe of the merchandize of "Aden, which is firſt brought to Coſſeir, "and afterwards to Cous, by a three days "journey over the deſert."

This city, as well as Cophtos, owed its riſe to the commerce of India, and enjoyed great opulence while under the Arabian government; but ſince the Turks have ſeized

(o) Abulfeda, Deſcription of Egypt. In the thirteenth century, Aden was the moſt flouriſhing city of Yemen, and traded both with India and Egypt. Golius and other writers have ſaid the ruins of Thebes were at Cous. This was an error.

on Egypt, and appointed a Pacha, who, with four-and-twenty Beys, prey on this fine country, Cous has undergone the ſame fate as her rivals; her trade is ruined by the oppreſſions of government, her glory eclipſed, and her buildings reduced to a few huts inhabited by a ſmall number of Copts and Arabs. Giena, which has replaced theſe two cities, retains nothing of their magnificence. Neither the advantage of ſituation, nor the fertility of the neighbouring country, can preponderate againſt the deſpotiſm of Egyptian government, and the hoſtile pillages of the Bedouins.

Having ſpoken of theſe ancient cities, Sir, it will be neceſſary to deſcribe this part of Egypt, which is ſo little known, yet ſo intereſting. Pleaſe to examine the map, and you will ſee the Nile, a fugitive from the latter cataract, bending its courſe towards Lybia, in the ſame direction with the mountains. Soon repelled by inſurmountable obſtacles, it turns eaſtward, and approaches the Red Sea. The interval which ſeparates them being only three-and-thirty leagues, which was the reaſon why Strabo called it an iſthmus. At the two extremes of this iſthmus

iſthmus ſtand Giena and Coſſeir, between which is a deep valley, where traces of the ſea may be found at every ſtep, but which, though barren and deſtitute of verdure, is very paſſable. In this valley, water, and a ſpecies of the Acacia, named Naboul, which produces gum arabic, are found. The Arabs chew this ſhrub, no doubt, to quench their thirſt. The mines of emeralds and precious metals, which the ancient writers mention *(p)*, and which formerly were one principal ſource of the wealth of Egypt, ſtill ſubſiſt among the mountains, beſide the road; but the ignorance of the modern Egyptians, and the fear of expoſing themſelves to the oppreſſions of the Beys, prevent theſe mines from being worked.

The port of Coſſeir is ſmall, and can only be entered by large boats; the ſhipping are obliged to remain in the road, where they find good anchorage, which occaſioned the Greeks and Romans to keep their navy there. The town, or rather the village, only contains at preſent about two hundred mud-walled cottages, and is commanded by

(p) Pliny, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus.

a caſtle, flanked with four towers, the fire of which would be ſufficient to defend itſelf and the ſhipping of the port; but it is ſuffered to fall in ruins, and its whole garriſon is a porter, whoſe employment it is to open and ſhut an old iron gate. The inhabitants are a mixture of Turks and Arabs, governed by a Cachef, who is dependant on the governor of Giena. The enormous duties of ten per cent. which are paid in kind, by all merchandize landed at Coſſeir, is no encouragement to trade. Yet the tyranny of the Beys, the oppreſſions of the governor, and the dread of the Bedouins, are ſhackles much more terrible. Notwithſtanding which, the ſituation of this port is ſo favourable for the interchange and vent of the productions of Egypt, Arabia, and India, that, though this commerce is much diminiſhed, it ſtill ſubſiſts. Any powerful maritime nation might remove theſe obſtacles at a ſmall expence, and aſcertain prodigious profits from this important trade; but theſe muſt depend on the means employed.

M. Chevalier, Commandant General of the French eſtabliſhments in Bengal, has lately arrived at Grand Cairo, by the way of

of Coſſeir; and I imagine, Sir, you will not be diſpleaſed to learn by what means a Frenchman could protect himſelf from Turks and Arabs, equally deſirous to ſhare his ſpoils. He has ſhewn me his journal, which will teach us the proper mode of traverſing theſe deſerts. His veſſel having been ſtruck by lightning on the coaſt of Malabar, and afterwards diſmaſted off Gedda, he was obliged to land at this port, and this accident cauſed him to loſe the proper ſeaſon of gaining Suez; he muſt either wait for the next monſoon, or venture, with ſmall veſſels, on a tempeſtuous ſea; and this, dangerous as it was, his zeal to ſerve his country made him determine to undertake. After combating three months againſt contrary winds, and being repeatedly in danger of periſhing, he reached Coſſeir, which place he left in a few days, in company with ſix Europeans, mounted on camels. They traverſed the long valley which croſſes the iſthmus, the bottom of which is level, covered with ſand, and petrified ſhells. This valley is by turns narrow and ſpacious; here bordered by mountains, from the ſides of which the winter torrents tear rocky fragments of granite,

hunger and laſſitude; but, having bathed in the waters of the Nile, fed on the delicious fruits which grow on its banks, and recruited exhauſted nature with the productions of the teeming fields it fertilizes, they felt a change, a renovation, a happineſs, the inexpreſſible delight of which the traveller, only, who has croſſed theſe deſerts, can imagine.

A diſaſter, which has lately happened, teſtifies the prudence of M. Chevalier's conduct. About the ſame time that he departed from Coſſeir, a rich caravan, the lading of which appertained to the Engliſh, was attacked between Suez and Grand Cairo. Several Europeans were preſent; but, to avoid the labour of carrying their arms, they had tied them on the backs of the camels; beſides which, they marched at a diſtance from each other, and without precaution, depending upon the aſſurances of the Beys, which occaſioned their ruin. The Bedouins fell unexpectedly upon them, without giving them time to put themſelves on the defenſive, ſeized their wealth, and killed many of them. M. de St. Germain had the misfortune to loſe a beloved brother, and two-thirds of his fortune,

fortune, in this fatal rencontre. After wandering three days and nights in that barren wilderneſs, naked, without food, without water, and almoſt without hope, he arrived, half dead, at the hut of an Arab, who waſhed him with freſh water, fed him with milk, cloathed, and conducted him to Grand Cairo. I had this relation from his own mouth: he is now on his return to France, where, probably, his misfortunes will intereſt and incite the compaſſion of government.

The inconveniences of the road from Coſſeir are not ſo great during winter; the heats being much leſs. The fear of robbers is then the greateſt obſtacle; but, if travellers go in a body, they may ſecure themſelves from their attacks. Even during ſummer, if proper care be taken to have a ſupply of proviſions and water, in jars, or ſkins, not rubbed with rancid oil, people who are accuſtomed to theſe climates perform this journey with tolerable eaſe. Did the four-and-twenty tyrants, who devour the riches of Egypt, think but a moment on the happineſs of the inhabitants, they would cauſe three public edifices to be built, where the

caravans

caravans might find reſt and refreſhment; but their whole ambition is the unbounded gratification of their paſſions, a reign of a few days, and the mutual deſtruction of each other. In the ſhort ſpace of three years, I have beheld eleven paſs from the exceſs of voluptuouſneſs to the grave; periſhing by the ſword of their rivals, whom a ſimilar fate attends. A ſtill greater number have eſcaped by flight. What then have agriculture and commerce to expect under ſuch a government? Were Egypt ſubjected by an enlightened people, the route to Coſſeir would be ſafe and commodious. I even ſuppoſe it poſſible to turn an arm of the Nile into this deep valley, over which the ſea formerly flowed. Such a canal appears not more difficult than that which Amrou cut between Foſtat and Colſoum, and would be much more advantageous, ſince it would abridge the voyage of the Indian ſhipping a hundred leagues, and through a perilous ocean, acroſs the farther and narrow part of the Red Sea. The cloths of Bengal, the perfumes of Yemen, and the gold duſt of Abyſſinia, would ſoon be ſeen at Coſſeir; and the corn, linen, and various productions

productions of Egypt, given in return. A nation friendly to the arts, would ſoon render this fine country once more the centre of the commerce of the world, the point which ſhould unite Europe to Aſia. While one part of the ſhipping were navigating the Arabian Gulph, and ſailing to India, another would ſwarm upon the Mediterranean ſea, and Alexandria ſhould again revive from its aſhes. An obſervatory, built where the ſky is always ſerene, would likewiſe add to the progreſs of aſtronomy; and this happy country ſhould a ſecond time become the abode of the ſciences, and the moſt delicious the earth contains. Theſe, Sir, are not chimerical projects. The ſituation of Egypt is the moſt advantageous man can imagine: it communicates with the eaſtern and the weſtern ocean. Nature has been profuſely kind; nor is any thing wanting, but a people worthy to inhabit it, in order to raiſe it to the higheſt degree of power and glory.

LETTER

LETTER III.

THE ROUTE FROM COUS TO THEBES. THE EASTERN PART OF THE LATTER DESCRIBED.

A deſcription of Thebes from Diodorus Siculus and Strabo. State of that city under the Perſians, Roman and Turkiſh Emperors. The porticos, Sphinx-avenues, edifices, and ruins of the great temple, near Carnac, in the eaſtern part of Thebes, which building and ruins are half a league in circumference. The plain of Carnac, leading to Luxor, which formerly was covered with houſes, cultivated at preſent. The remains of the temple of Luxor, and the magnificent obeliſks, which are the moſt beautiful in Egypt, or the whole world, deſcribed.

Grand Cairo.

GOING from Cous towards Aſſouan, we leave the town of Nequada on the right. The Mahometans have ſeveral moſques, and a Coptic biſhop reſides there. The iſland of Matara is very near it, and two leagues further we diſcover the ruins of Thebes, the

magnificence of which poets and hiſtorians have alike been eager to deſcribe. Citations from the ancients, who ſaw this city, will give you, Sir, an idea of what it formerly was; and an exact account of the monuments, ſtill in being, will enable you to judge what degree of credit thoſe recitals deſerve. The dotted line in the map, paſſing by Carnac, Luxor, Medinet-Abou, and Gournou, will indicate what the extent was of this once famous city.

"The great Dioſpolis," ſays Diodorus Siculus *(q)*, "which the Greeks have nam-
"ed Thebes, was ſix leagues in circumfe-
"rence. Buſiris, who founded it, adorned
"it with magnificent edifices and preſents.
"The fame of its power and wealth, cele-
"brated by Homer, has filled the world.
"Its gates, and the numerous veſtibules of
"its temples, occaſioned this poet to give
"it the name of Hecatompylis. Never was
"there city that received ſo many offerings,
"in ſilver, gold, ivory, coloſſal ſtatues
"and obeliſks, each cut from a ſingle ſtone.
"Four principal temples are eſpecially ad-

(*q*) Lib. I.

" mired there, the moſt ancient of which " was ſurpriſingly grand and ſumptuous. It " was thirteen ſtadia in circumference *(r)*, " and ſurrounded by walls, twenty-four feet in " thickneſs, and forty-five cubits high. The " riches and workmanſhip of its ornaments " were correſpondent to the majeſty of the " building, which many kings contributed " to embelliſh. The temple ſtill is ſtand- " ing, but it was ſtripped of its ſilver, gold, " ivory, and precious ſtones, when Cam- " byſes ſet fire to all the temples of E- " gypt."

I have only quoted the principal facts which that hiſtorian writes concerning the flouriſhing ſtate of Thebes, they being ſufficient to convey an idea of its beauty; what I ſhall cite from Strabo will give a picture of its decline, ſuch as it was eighteen centuries ago.

" Thebes, or Dioſpolis, preſents only re- " mains of its former grandeur, diſperſ- " ed over a ſpace eighty ſtadia in length.

(r) Diodorus Siculus includes the ſphinx-avenues, and the porticos, edifices, and courts which are built round the temple, properly ſo called; and we ſhall find he was very near the truth.

" Here

" Here are found a great number of tem-
" ples, in part deſtroyed by Cambyſes: its
" inhabitants have retired to ſmall towns,
" eaſt of the Nile, where the preſent city is
" built; and to the weſtern ſhore, near
" Memnonium *(s)*, at which place we ad-
" mire two coloſſal ſtone figures, ſtanding
" on each ſide; the one entire, the other in
" part thrown down, it has been ſaid, by an
" earthquake *(t)*. There is a popular opi-
" nion that the remaining part of this ſta-
" tue, towards the baſe, utters a ſound
" once a day. Curioſity leading me to ex-
" amine the fact, I went thither with Ælius
" Gallus, who was accompanied by his
" numerous friends, and an eſcort of ſoldiers.
" I heard a ſound, about ſix o'clock in the
" morning, but dare not affirm whether it
" proceeded from the baſe, from the coloſſus,
" or had been produced by ſome perſon pre-
" ſent; for one is rather inclined to ſuppoſe
" a thouſand different cauſes, than that it

(*s*) Strabo calls the temple, near which was the ſtatue of Memnon, Memnonium.

(*t*) Strabo is the only ancient writer who attributes the fall of this coloſſus to an earthquake; the reſt all ſay it was thrown down by order of Cambyſes.

" ſhould be the effect of a certain aſſemblage " of ſtones. Beyond Memnonium are the " tombs of the Kings, hewn out of the " rock. There are about forty, made after " a marvellous manner, and worthy the at- " tention of travellers: near them are obe- " liſks, bearing various inſcriptions, de- " ſcriptive of the wealth, power, and exten- " ſive empire, of thoſe ſovereigns, who reign- " ed over Scythia, Bactriana, India, and what " is now called Ionia. They alſo recount the " various tributes thoſe kings had exacted, " and the number of their troops, which " amounted to a million of men."

Before I tell you, Sir, how many of the monuments, deſcribed by theſe hiſtorians, ſtill exiſt, it is neceſſary to inform you of the diſtribution of the ornaments, veſtibules, courts, and edifices of the Egyptian temples, leſt we ſhould loſe ourſelves amidſt their ruins.

" In front of each of the temples of Egypt " is a paved avenue, a hundred feet wide, and " three or four hundred in length. Two rows " of ſphinxes, twenty cubits or more diſtant " from each other, adorned the ſides of theſe " avenues, at the end of which porticos were " built,

" built, but not in any fixed number. Theſe " porticos lead to a magnificent open ſpace, " which fronts the temple. Beyond is the " ſanctuary, which is ſmaller, and in which " no human figures are ever ſculptured, and " very ſeldom thoſe of animals. Walls, " of an equal height with the temple, form " the ſides of this open ſpace. Theſe walls " run in diverging lines, and are wideſt at " the end fartheſt from the temple by fifty " or ſixty cubits. They abound in ſculptured " figures, after the manner of the ancient " Greek and Etruſcan works. There is uſual- " ly a ſpacious edifice, ſupported by a pro- " digious number of columns, beſide theſe " temples *(u)*." Having nothing to conſult but monuments mutilated, by men or by time, I hope the above deſcription will ſupply the imperfection of mine. Thus guided, let us advance to the ſouth of Carnak, where we find the remains of one of the four principal temples mentioned by Diodorus Siculus. Here are eight entrances, three of which have each a Sphinx, of enormous ſize, ſtanding in front; with two coloſſal ſtatues, on each ſide the ſphinx, which are each cut

(*u*) Strabo, lib. 17.

from a ſingle block of marble, in the antique taſte. Croſſing theſe majeſtic avenues, we come to four porticos, each thirty feet wide, fifty-two in height, and one hundred and fifty in length. The entrance to theſe is thro' pyramidal gates, and the cieling is formed of ſtones of an aſtoniſhing ſize, ſupported by the two walls.

The firſt of theſe porticos is entirely of red granite, perfectly poliſhed. Without are four rows of hieroglyphics, within only three. On each of the latter, I remarked two human figures, larger than life, and ſculptured with great art. Coloſſal figures, riſing fifteen feet above the bottom of the door, decorate its ſides; without are two ſtatues, thirty-three feet high, the one of red granite, the other ſpotted with black and grey; and within is another, of a ſingle block of marble, wanting the head, each bearing a kind of croſs in its hand, that is to ſay, a *phallus*, which, among the Egyptians, was the ſymbol of fertility.

The ſecond portico is half deſtroyed; the gate has only two rows of hieroglyphics, of gigantic ſize, one towards the ſouth, the other towards the north. Each front of the third

third portico is covered with hieroglyphics of coloſſal figures, and at the entrance of the gate are the remains of a ſtatue of white marble, the trunk of which is fifteen feet in circumference, and wearing a helmet, round which a ſerpent is twined. The fourth portico is little more than walls, almoſt entirely deſtroyed, and heaps of rubbiſh, among which are parts of a coloſſus, of red granite, the body of which is thirty feet round.

Beyond theſe porticos the high walls, which form the firſt court of the temple, began. The people entered at twelve gates; ſeveral are deſtroyed, and others very ruinous. That which has ſuffered leaſt from time, and the outrages of barbarians, faces the weſt. Before it is a long ſphinx avenue. The dimenſions of this gate are forty feet in width, ſixty high, and forty-eight thick, at the foundation. In the front are two rows of ſmall windows, and the remains of ſteps in its ſides, leading to its ſummit. This gate, ſo maſſy as to appear indeſtructible, is in the ruſtic ſtile, without hieroglyphics, and magnificent in ſimplicity. Through this we enter the great court, on two of the ſides of which are terraces, eighty feet in width, and

raiſed ſix feet above the ground. Along theſe run two beautiful colonnades. Beyond is the ſecond court, which leads to the temple, and, by its extent, equals the majeſty of the building. It is likewiſe embelliſhed by a double colonnade; each column is above fifty feet high, and eighteen in circumference at the baſe. Their capitals are in the form of a vaſe, over which a ſquare ſtone is laid, which probably ſerved as a pedeſtal for ſtatues. Two prodigious coloſſal figures, mutilated by violence, terminate theſe colonnades. Standing at this place, the aſtoniſhed eye ſurveys the temple, the height of which is moſt ſurpriſing, in all its immenſity. Its walls of marble appear everlaſting. Its roof, which riſes in the center, is ſuſtained by eighteen rows of columns. Thoſe ſtanding under the moſt lofty part are thirty feet in circumference, and eighty in height: the others are one third leſs. The world does not contain a building the character and grandeur of which more forcibly impreſs awe and majeſty: it ſeems adequate to the high idea the Egyptians had formed of the Supreme Being; nor can it be entered, or beheld, but with reverence. Its ſides, both within

within and without, are loaded with hieroglyphics, and extraordinary figures. On the northern wall are repreſentations of battles, with horſes and chariots, one of which is drawn by ſtags. On the ſouthern are two barks, with canopies, at the end of which the ſun appears; the mariners guide them with poles; two men, ſeated at the ſtern, ſeem to direct their proceedings, and receive their homage. Theſe are allegoric deſigns. In the poetic language of the Greeks, the ſun was painted in a car, drawn by horſes, guided by Apollo. The Egyptians repreſent it on board a ſhip, conducted by Oſiris, and ſeven mariners, who repreſent the planets. *(x)*

The entrance, which fronted the temple of Luxor, is greatly decayed; but, if we may judge by the obeliſks that remain, it muſt have been moſt ſumptuous. There are two of ſixty feet high, and twenty-one in circumference at the baſe; and, a little farther, two others, of ſeventy-two feet in height, and thirty in circumference. Each of theſe ſuperb monuments is formed from a ſingle block of red granite, and does honor to the genius and

x) Macrobius Somn. Scipionis. Mart. Capella, lib. 2.

ſcience

ſcience of the antient Egyptians. There are hieroglyphics, in various diviſions, engraved on theſe obeliſks, three of which remain ſtanding, and the other is thrown down.

Proceeding eaſtward from the great temple, after croſſing heaps of rubbiſh, we come to a building, called, by Strabo, the Sanctuary, which is ſmall. The gate is ornamented with columns, three of which are grouped, and united under one ſole capital. Within are various apartments of granite. Here the virgin conſecrated to Jupiter was kept, and who offered herſelf in ſacrifice after a very extraordinary manner. *(y)*

I have only deſcribed thoſe parts of the temple, Sir, which are in beſt preſervation. Within its vaſt limits are ſeveral edifices, almoſt deſtroyed, which, no doubt, appertained to the prieſts and ſacred animals. Near the ruins is a large expanſe of water; and we meet, at every ſtep, with remains of columns,

(y) Jovi quem præcipuè colunt (Thebani) virgo quædam genere clariſſima et ſpecie pulcherrima ſacratur; quales Græci Pallacas vocant. Ea pellicis more cum quibus vult coit uſque ad naturalem corporis purgationem. Poſt purgationem, vero, viro datur; ſed priuſquam nubat, poſt pellicatûs tempus, in mortuæ morem lugetur. Strabo, lib. 17.

ſphinxes,

ſphinxes, ſtatues, coloſſal figures, and ruins, ſo magnificent that the imagination is kept in continual admiration and amazement. Were the ground, occupied by the various entrances, porticos, and courts, appertaining to the temple, meaſured, we ſhould find the whole was, at leaſt, half a league in circumference; and that Diodorus Siculus was not deceived, when he allowed it that extent.

The plain, lying between Carnac and Luxor, is not leſs than a league in length, and was once covered with the houſes of the Egyptians, who lived in that eaſtern part of Thebes. Though, according to Diodorus Siculus *(z)*, they were five ſtories high, and ſolidly built, they have not been able to reſiſt the ravages of time and conquerors, but are totally deſtroyed *(a)*. The ground is at preſent much raiſed, by the annual floodings

(z) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

(a) Pocock, deceived by this total deſtruction, imagined Thebes formerly contained no great buildings, except the temples, and that the inhabitants there lived in huts, or tents, &c. The teſtimony of Diodorus Siculus refutes this aſſertion.

of

of the river, which has covered it with ſeveral feet of mud, and the ruins are below the ſurface. Corn, flax, and vegetables, grow in the very places where, three thouſand years ago, public ſquares, palaces, and numerous edifices, were the admiration of the enlightened people who inhabited them. At the farther end of this plain is the village of Luxor, near which are the avenues and remains of another temple, ſtill more ruinous than the firſt. Its extent is ſpacious, and ſo are its courts, which are entered under porticos ſupported by columns forty feet high, without eſtimating the baſe, buried under the ſand. Pyramidal majeſtic gates, abounding in hieroglyphics; the remains of walls built with flags of granite, and which the barbarity of men only could overturn; rows of coloſſal marble figures, forty feet high, one third buried in the ground; all declare what the magnificence of the principal edifice, the ſcite of which is known by a hill of ruins, muſt have been. But nothing can give a more ſublime idea of its grandeur than the two obeliſks, by which it was embelliſhed, and which ſeem to have been placed there

by

by giants, or the Genii of fable. They are each a ſolid block of granite, ſeventy-two feet high, above the ſurface, and thirty-two in circumference; but, being ſunk deep in the ſand and mud, they may well be ſuppoſed ninety feet from the baſe to the ſummit. The one is ſplit, towards the middle; the other perfectly preſerved. The hieroglyphics they contain, divided into columns, and cut in bas-relief projecting an inch and a half, do honour to the ſculptor; the hardneſs of the ſtone has preſerved them from being injured by the air. Nothing can be more majeſtic than theſe obeliſks. Egypt is the ſole country in the world where men have performed works like theſe; yet there is not a city on the face of the globe where they would not become its grandeſt ornament.

Such, Sir, are the moſt remarkable monuments found at preſent, on the eaſtern ſide of Thebes. Their very aſpect would awaken the genius of a poliſhed nation, but the Turks and Copts, cruſhed to duſt beneath an iron ſceptre, behold them without aſtoniſhment, and build huts, which ſcarcely can ſcreen them from the ſun, in their neighbourhood.

Theſe

Theſe barbarians, if they want a mill-ſtone, do not bluſh to overturn a column, the ſupport of a temple or portico, and ſaw it in pieces. Thus abject does deſpotiſm render men!

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

THE WESTERN PART OF THEBES DESCRIBED.

A viſit to the tombs of the Kings of Thebes, dug in the mountain, through ſubterranean paſſages. Sarcophagi, galleries, and hieroglyphics deſcribed. Obſervations on the grand temple, the roof of which was ſupported by ſquare pillars, bearing ſtatues. Parts of a prodigious coloſſal figure found among theſe ruins. The ruins of Memnonium, denoted by heaps of marble, and rows of ſtatues, either mutilated or ſunk a third of their height in the earth, and particularly by the celebrated coloſſal figure of Memnon, famous among the antients for the ſounds it articulated at ſun-riſing.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE villages of Gournou and Medinet-Abou, built where the weſtern part of Thebes once ſtood, are ſurrounded by grand ruins. One league weſtward of the firſt are the

grottos named *Biban Elmelouk*, the gates of the Kings; where are ſeen the tombs of the ancient monarchs of the Thebais. The road to them is ſtrewed with marbles and fragments, and we arrive at them by a winding narrow paſs, the ſides of which, in various places, have been hollowed out. Large excavations have been made in the rock, which were antecedent to the building of houſes and palaces. The valley widens at the farther end, about two hundred fathoms, and here, at the foot of the mountain, are the paſſages which lead to the tombs. Strabo counts forty of them *(b)*, Diodorus Siculus forty-ſeven *(c)*; but he adds that, in the time of Auguſtus, ſeventeen only remained, ſome of which were very much damaged. At preſent moſt of them are cloſed up, and nine of them only can be entered. The ſubterranean galleries leading to them, are in general ten feet high, and as many in breadth. The walls and roofs, cut in a white rock, preſerve the brilliant poliſh of ſtucco. At the far end of four principal alleys, longer and higher than the reſt, is the door of a large hall, in the centre of which a marble

(b) Strabo, lib. 17.——*(c)* Diod. Siculus.

tomb

tomb is ſeen, on the top of which a figure is ſculptured, in baſſo-relievo, and another holding a ſceptre in one hand, on the wall; a third, alſo, on the cieling, bearing a ſceptre, with wings deſcending as low as his heels.

The ſecond grotto is ſpacious, and much embelliſhed, containing, on the cieling, numerous golden ſtars; birds painted in colours which ſeem to have loſt nothing of their freſhneſs and brilliancy; and hieroglyphics divided in columns, and engraved in the walls. Two men are ſeated beſide the gate, the paſſage to which is a long gentle declivity. A block of red granite, ſixteen feet high, ten long, and ſix wide, forms the ſarcophagus of the king, who is ſculptured in baſſo-relievo on the top of the tomb, and ſurrounded by a hieroglyphical inſcription. Niches cut out of the rock, probably, ſerved as repoſitories for the mummies of the royal family. The tombs, erected in other apartments, have been carried away by force, as their fragments atteſt. There is one exceedingly fine grotto, which contains only a marble lid, ten feet long and ſix wide; and in the farther part of the moſt diſtant ca-

vern is a human figure, in baſſo-relievo, with the arms croſſing the breaſt, and two others, kneeling, one on each ſide.

Theſe galleries and ſubterranean apartments which go very far under the mountains, and a very ſmall part, only, of which I have deſcribed, are embelliſhed by marble figures of men, birds, and various animals; ſome ſculptured in baſſo-relievo, others cut hollow, and ſome painted in colours which are not to be effaced. Theſe unintelligible characters, which contain the hiſtory of the times, conceal, beneath their impenetrable veil, moſt intereſting diſcoveries, and the moſt remarkable facts relative to the monarchs of the Thebais, whoſe power extended as far as India. Torches are neceſſary in examining theſe labyrinths, into which the light of day cannot penetrate. Such, Sir, are the caverns where the bodies of kings repoſe, ſurrounded by ſilence and ſhades. A kind of religious terror is felt while wandering through them; as if the preſence of the living diſturbed the dead, in the aſylums where they have retired to reſt, in peaceful ſleep.

Returning from theſe dark abodes, and proceeding ſouth-eaſt, the traveller ſoon meets with

with the remains of a temple, on the ſquare pillars of which are ſtatues, that all have had their heads broken off, holding a ſceptre in one hand, and a whip in the other. This edifice is little more than a mountain of ruins. On the ſouth ſide is a pyramidal gate, which was the entrance to a portico. The extent of the courts round the temple is denoted by fragments of columns, and ſtones of an incredible grandeur. In one of theſe courts are parts of two ſtatues, of black marble, which were thirty feet high: in the other, one ſtands in ſtupid amazement, at beholding a coloſſal figure, extended on the ground, and broken near the middle. The ſpace between the ſhoulders is one and twenty feet; the head eleven feet in length, and eighteen in circumference. This gigantic ſtatue is only inferior in ſize to that of Memnon. The remains of the buildings appertaining to this temple cover a mile of ground, and leave a high idea of its magnificence in the mind.

Proceeding onward, about half a league, we come to the ruins of Memnonium, near Medinet-Abou, where is the largeſt coloſſus of Egypt, which marks the ſituation of the tomb of Oſymandyas, for ſo Diodorus Siculus

indicates. Before I deſcribe the ruins of this famous place, permit me to cite what Diodorus has written on the ſubject. "Ten "ſtadia from the tombs of the kings, of "Thebes," *(d)* ſays this hiſtorian, "is the "admirable one of Oſymandyas. The en-"trance to it is by a veſtibule of various "coloured ſtones, two hundred feet long, "and ſixty-eight high. Leaving this, we "enter a ſquare periſtyle, each ſide of which "is four hundred feet in length. Animals, "twenty-four feet high, cut from blocks of "granite, ſerve as columns, and ſupport the "cieling, which is compoſed of marble ſlabs, "twenty-ſeven feet ſquare, and embelliſhed "throughout by golden ſtars, glittering on "a ground of azure. Beyond this periſtyle "is another entrance, and after that a veſ-"tibule, built like the firſt, but containing "more ſculptures of all kinds. At the

(d) Diod. Siculus, lib. 1. The great caverns, where the tombs of the kings of Thebes may be ſeen, are only three quarters of a league from Medinet-Abou; therefore, Diodorus is tolerably exact, ſince, at moſt, he is not deceived above a quarter of a league. Pocock has committed a more conſiderable error in placing the tomb of Oſymandyas at Luxor, on the other ſide the Nile.

"entrance

" entrance are three ſtatues, formed from a " ſingle ſtone, by Memnon Syenite, the " principal of which, repreſenting the king, " is ſeated, and is the largeſt in Egypt. One " of its feet, exactly meaſured, is above ſeven " cubits. The other two figures, ſupported " on his knees, the one on the right, the " other on the left, are thoſe of his mother " and daughter. The whole work is leſs " valuable for its enormous grandeur than " for the beauty of the ſculpture, and the " choice of the granite, which, though ſo " extenſive, has neither flaw, nor blemiſh, " on its ſurface. The coloſſus bears this in- " ſcription, *I am Oſymandyas, king of kings: " he who would comprehend my greatneſs, " and where I reſt, let him deſtroy ſome one " of theſe works (e).* Beſides this is another " ſtatue of his mother, cut from a ſingle " block of granite, thirty feet high. Three " queens are ſculptured on her head, inti- " mating that ſhe was daughter, wife and " mother of a king. "

(e) I believe this inſcription was fatal to the coloſſus, and occaſioned Cambyſes to break it in two.

The French reads, *que l'on detruiſe*; the Greek, νικάτω τι τ ἐμῶν ἔργων, let him conquer, i. e. exceed, ſome of my works. T.

" After this portico is a periſtyle, ſtill " more beautiful than the firſt, on the ſtones " of which is engraved the hiſtory of the " war of Oſymandyas, againſt the rebels of " Bactriana. The façade of the front wall " exhibits this prince attacking ramparts, " at the foot of which the river flows; he " is combating advanced troops, and by his " ſide is a terrible lion, ardent in his defence. " On the right wall are captives in chains, " with their hands and genitals cut off, as " marks of reproach for their cowardice. " The wall on the left contains ſymbolical " figures, of exceedingly good ſculpture, " deſcriptive of the triumphs and ſacrifice of " Oſymandyas, returning from this war. " In the center of the periſtyle, where the " roof is open, an altar was erected of a " ſingle ſtone, of marvellous bulk, and ex- " quiſite workmanſhip; and, at the farther " wall are two coloſſal figures, each hewn " from a ſingle block of marble, forty feet " high, ſeated on their pedeſtals. This " admirable periſtyle has three gates, one " between the two ſtatues, and the others " on each ſide. Theſe lead to an edifice two " hundred feet ſquare, the roof of which

" is

" is ſupported by high columns. It reſem-
" bles a magnificent theatre. Several figures,
" carved in wood, repreſent a tribunal ad-
" miniſtering juſtice. Thirty judges are ſeen
" on one of the walls, and in the midſt of
" them the chief juſtice, with a pile of
" books at his feet, and a figure of Truth,
" with her eyes ſhut, ſuſpended from his
" neck.

" Beyond is a walk, ſurrounded by edi-
" fices of various forms, in which were
" tables ſtored with all kinds of moſt deli-
" cious viands. In one of theſe, Oſyman-
" dyas, cloathed in magnificent robes, offers
" up the gold and ſilver which he annually
" drew from the mines of Egypt to the
" gods. Beneath, the amount of this reve-
" nue, which was thirty-two million minas
" of ſilver, was inſcribed. Another building
" contained the ſacred library, at the entrance
" of which theſe words were read, PHYSIC
" FOR THE SOUL. A fourth contained all
" the deities of Egypt, with the king, offer-
" ing ſuitable preſents to each, and calling
" Oſiris, and the ſurrounding divinities, to
" witneſs he had exerciſed piety toward the
" gods, and juſtice toward men. Beſide

" the library ſtood one of the fineſt of theſe " edifices, and in it twenty couches, to re- " cline on, while feaſting; alſo the ſtatues " of Jupiter, Juno, and Oſymandyas, whoſe " body, it is ſuppoſed, was depoſited here. " Various adjoining apartments contained " repreſentations of all the conſecrated ani- " mals of Egypt. Hence was the aſcent to " the ſepulchre of the king, on the ſummit " of which was placed a circle of gold, in " thickneſs one cubit, and three hundred " and ſixty-five in circumference; each " cubit correſponded to a day in the year, " and on it were engraved the riſing and " ſetting of the ſtars, for that day, with " ſuch aſtrological indications as the ſuper- " ſtition of the Egyptians had affixed to " them. Cambyſes is ſaid to have carried " off this circle, when he ravaged Egypt. " Such, according to hiſtorians, was the " tomb of Oſymandyas, which ſurpaſſed all " others, as well by its wealth as by the " workmanſhip of the ſkilful artiſts em- " ployed." (*)

(*) Some very ſlight deviations from the French text have been made on the authority of Diodorus. T.

I dare

I dare not, Sir, warrant all that Diodorus Siculus advances, on the faith of preceding writers; for, in his time, the greateſt part of theſe edifices were no longer in exiſtence. Nay, I confeſs that, in any other country, ſuch marvellous edifices would paſs for mere chimæras; but in this land of fecundity, which ſeems to have been firſt honoured by the creative genius of the arts, they acquire probability. Let us examine the remains of thoſe monuments, and our eyes will oblige us to believe in miracles. Theſe remains are heaped together near Medinet-Abou *(f)*, in the circumference of about half a league. The temple, veſtibules, and periſtyles, preſent only piles of ruins, among which ſome pyramidal gates rear their heads, whoſe ſolidity has rendered them indeſtructible; but the numerous coloſſal figures, deſcribed by Diodorus, though mutilated, ſtill ſubſiſt. That neareſt the ruins, which is of yellow marble, is ſunk in the earth, one third of its height. On a line with it is another of ſpotted marble, black and white, thirty feet

(f) Medinet-Abou ſignifies the city of the father. That Memnonium ſtood here cannot be doubted, ſince it is alſo called, in the Itinerary, *Papa*, or Father.

long,

long, with many hieroglyphics ſculptured on its back. In the ſpace between them, the ground is covered with fragments of columns, and broken ſtatues, denoting the arrangement of the veſtibules. Beyond are two other coloſſal ſtatues, totally disfigured, and a hundred fathom ſtill further, the traveller is ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at the ſight of two gigantic figures, which ſeem like rocks, and are ſeated beſide each other. Their pedeſtals are nearly equal, and formed from blocks of granite, thirty feet long, and eighteen wide. The ſmalleſt of theſe ſtatues is, alſo, one ſole ſtone; the other, the largeſt in Egypt, is formed of five different pieces of granite, and broken in the middle. This ſhould ſeem to be the ſtatue of Oſymandyas *(g)*, for we find two figures, ſculptured in baſſo-relievo, the length of his legs, and riſing one third as high as himſelf.

(g) The only objection to this opinion is that, according to Diodorus Siculus, the ſtatue of Oſymandyas, with thoſe of his mother and daughter, were all formed from one ſole block; and this coloſſus is compoſed of ſeveral pieces: but the firſt of theſe pieces, reaching from the ſole of the foot to the elbows, comprehends the two other figures, which, perhaps, is what the hiſtorian means to ſay. The remainder is conformable to his deſcription.

Theſe

Theſe were the mother and daughter of this prince. The other coloſſus, of one ſingle ſtone, correſponding to the dimenſions Diodorus Siculus gives, alſo repreſented the mother of the king. You will form ſome idea of the gigantic ſize of the grand coloſſus, when you are told that its foot, alone, is near eleven feet long, which anſwers to the ſeven cubits of Diodorus. This ſtatue, the half of which remains on its baſe, and which Strabo calls the ſtatue of Memnon, uttered a ſound at ſun-riſing. Its fame formerly was very great. Several writers have ſpoken of it with enthuſiaſm, regarding it as one of the ſeven wonders of the world. A crowd of Greek and Latin inſcriptions, which are ſtill legible on the baſe and legs of the coloſſus, atteſt that princes, generals, governors, and men of all conditions, have heard this miraculous ſound. You know, Sir, what the judicious Strabo thought, and, I hope, you will be of his opinion. Such, Sir, are the remains of Thebes, and her hundred gates, the antiquity of which is loſt in the obſcurity of ages, and which ſtill contains proofs of the perfection of the arts in thoſe moſt diſtant times. All here is ſublime,

lime, all majeſtic. Its kings ſeem to have acquired the glory of never dying, while their obeliſks and coloſſal ſtatues exiſt, and to have only laboured for immortality. They could preſerve their memory againſt the efforts of time, but not againſt the barbariſm of conquerors; thoſe moſt dreadful ſcourges of ſcience and nations, which, in their pride, they have too often eraſed from the face of the earth.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER V.

THE ROUTE BETWEEN THEBES AND ESNA.

A deſcription of Armant, formerly Hermunthis, where are two antique temples, built in honour of Jupiter and Apollo, the latter in good preſervation. Remarks on Okſor and its pottery; on the ancient temple near the town of Eſna, in which the Turks houſe their cattle; and on another temple, weſt of that, where the Egyptians worſhipped Neith, the Minerva of the Greeks: on the convent founded by St. Helena, and the cemetery of the martyrs; alſo on the ſtone baram, and its uſe in making kitchen utenſils.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

WITH pain, Sir, one tears one's ſelf from Thebes and her hundred gates *(b)*. Her monuments

(*b*) I delight in this epithet, by which Homer, at a ſtroke, paints the grandeur of that city. It is ſublime becauſe not exaggerated. A little attention to the po-

tics,

monuments fix the traveller's eyes, and fill his mind with vaſt ideas. Beholding coloſſal figures and ſtately obeliſks, which ſeem to ſurpaſs human powers, he ſays, man has done this, and feels himſelf and his ſpecies ennobled. True it is, when he looks down on the wretched huts, ſtanding beſide theſe magnificent labours, and when he perceives an ignorant people, inſtead of a ſcientific nation, he grieves for the generations that are paſt, and the arts that periſhed with them; yet this very grief has a kind of charm for the heart of ſenſibility.

The wind impells us toward the fartheſt limits of Egypt, and rocks, hewn into coloſſal ſtatues, already diſappear. New objects fix the attention, and the riches of the banks of the Nile are contemplated with pleaſure, as we approach Armant. This village is built at the foot of an eminence,

ticos, veſtibules, periſtyles, and courts, appertaining to the grand temples of Egypt, will convince us thoſe built at Thebes had, at leaſt, a hundred gates. I, therefore, believe, like Diodorus Siculus, that this appellation, worthy the pen of Homer, was rather ſuggeſted by the gates of the temples than the walls; for it does not even appear that this famous city ever had any walls. No hiſtorian mentions any, nor are traces of any to be found.

on which the ruins of Hermunthis are ſeen. That ancient city paid particular adoration to Apollo and Jupiter, and contained two temples dedicated to them. Theſe time has reſpected and ſpared. That of Apollo is ſmall, but in good preſervation; its walls are of granite. A frize, with hawks, a bird ſacred to this god, is carried round. The platform is aſcended by ſtairs, cut in one of the ſides, and faced every way with hieroglyphics. Four rows of human figures are ſculptured without, and three within. The building is divided into ſeveral apartments. Five falcons, with their wings ſpread, decorate the cieling of the firſt; golden ſtars glitter on the vaulted roof of the ſecond. In this are two rams, facing each other, with hieroglyphics, artfully ſculptured. Two marble oxen *(i)* are at the extremity of this apartment, and, round it, women ſuckling their children. A large edifice, the foundation of which only remains, fronts the temple; beyond is a large baſon, intended as a reſervoir for the waters of the Nile. Farther along the bank of the river is another

(*i*) The ox, in Egypt, was the ſymbol of fertility and inundation.

edifice,

edifice, which, probably, was the temple of Jupiter, now made a church of by the Chriſtians. The plaiſter, on which croſſes are painted, covers the hieroglyphics and Egyptian inſcriptions.

Four leagues from Armant, up the country, is the village of Okſor. Abulfeda ſays that, in his time, much pottery was made there *(k)*; and this pottery ſtill ſubſiſts. They carry their vaſes to the Nile, tie them on a bed, formed by palm branches, with the mouth downwards, then put a ſecond row on the firſt, in like manner diſpoſed, and afterwards a third. This kind of raft floats ſupported by the air, which, included in the hollow of the vaſes, acts as in the diving-bell. Two men ſeat themſelves upon and conduct them from town to town, till they have ſold all their ware. I have ſeen ſeveral of theſe rafts even below Grand Cairo. Okſor ſtands in the midſt of a plain, fertile in corn, and excellent dates.

Proceeding ſouthward, we paſs two hills, near Gebelein, at the foot of which is the tomb of a Mahometan ſaint, and, ſoon af-

(*k*) Abulfeda, Deſcription of Egypt.

ter;

ter, diſcover Asfoun *(l)*, a tolerably large town, built near the ruins of Aphroditopolis. From Thebes to Syene, crocodiles are frequently perceived, ſtretched on the ſandy banks which the retiring Nile leaves dry. They ſleep in the ſun; but their ſleep is far from ſound, for they plunge into the water at the approach of boats. They ſeldom deſcend into the lower Thebais, and never below Grand Cairo. Theſe voracious animals, though covered with almoſt impenetrable ſcales, fly places too much frequented by men, and would rather harbour towards Aſſouan, where boats come more ſeldom. According to the ancients, the ichneumon entered the jaws of this monſter, while he was aſleep, and devoured his entrails. The ichneumon ſeeks for crocodile eggs, hidden among the ſands, and eats, when he can find, them. This was, perhaps, the origin of that fable.

We approach the port of Eſna, Sir, a conſiderable town, governed by an Arab prince, and a cachef, dependant on the Bey

(*l*) This is the third city of this name; they were ſo called by the Greeks. When I ſhall ſpeak, at the end of this volume, of the ancient religion of the country, I ſhall give ſuch Egyptian names as are come down to us.

of Girga. The Mahometans have ſeveral moſques here, and the Copts a church, with two prieſts to perform divine ſervice. Abulfeda ſays, "Eſna *(m)*, remarkable for its pub-" lic baths and trade, is built on the weſtern " bank of the Nile, between Aſſouan and " Cous, but nearer the latter. It acknow-" ledges, adds the geographer of Nubia, " the Copts for its founders. *(n)* Its well " cultivated lands abound in corn and palm-" trees, and its precincts in gardens and " fruit-trees. Here are ſeveral antique mo-" numents, built by the Copts, and ſtately " ruins."

This deſcription is ſtill ſuitable to Eſna, which is ſurrounded by rich fields, and ſhaded by orange groves, fertile in flowers and fruits. This city, formerly called Latopolis, adored Minerva, and the fiſh latus. *(o)* It contains an antique temple, which has thick walls on three of its ſides. Six large fluted columns, with capitals ornamented by palm leaves, ſtand in the front; eighteen others ſupport the roof, which is compoſed

(*m*) Deſcription of Egypt.

(*n*) The Arabs call the antient Egyptians Copts.

(*o*) Strabo, lib. 17.

of

of huge marble ſlabs. A frize is carried round the building, and innumerable hieroglyphics carved on the outſide. Thoſe within, executed much more carefully, mark the degree of progreſs the Egyptians had made in ſculpture. This temple is defiled by the dung heaps of the cattle which the Turks houſe in it. The barbarians do not bluſh to make cow-ſtalls of the fineſt monuments of antient Egypt.

Another temple ſtands a league weſt of Eſna, on the walls of which a woman, ſeated, is ſculptured in many places. *(p)* Minerva was honored here, and here the fiſh latus was cheriſhed. Perhaps the columns of this temple gave the Greeks the idea of the Corinthian order. The foliage of the capitals much reſembles that of the Acanthus, except that it projects leſs, and is ſometimes only ſketched. The brightneſs of the colouring of various animals, painted on

(*p*) This woman ſeated was an Egyptian divinity, called Neith, and which the antient Greeks, named (Ἀθήνη) Minerva. They, in imitation of their preceptors, at firſt engraved and painted her ſeated, as we ſhall ſee in the courſe of theſe letters.

the cieling, is preſerved. The Egyptians often uſed gold and ultramarine blue in their paintings; but, if we may judge by what remains of their works, they did not underſtand the art of ſhading, by which colours inſenſibly mingle with each other, and give objects the form and effect they poſſeſs in nature. Their colours were exceedingly brilliant, but almoſt always uniform, and laid on diſtinct from each other. South of Eſna are the ruins of a monaſtery, founded by St. Helena, near the cæmetery of the martyrs, where are tombs, under cupolas, ſupported by arcades. The inhabitants of Eſna having revolted againſt the perſecuting Diocleſian, he deſtroyed their city, and put them to the ſword. This place, conſecrated by religion, is become celebrated among the Copts, who go thither, on pilgrimage, from the moſt diſtant provinces of the kingdom.

Along the chain of mountains, which run eaſt of the Nile, and almoſt facing Eſna, are quarries which yield a ſoft ſtone, called baram, of which kitchen utenſils are made. It is hardened by the fire, and makes excellent pots and ſaucepans, which do not give

give the leaſt bad taſte to the food. I ſhall finiſh this letter, Sir, by warning you that Father Sicard and Vanſleb have confounded this place with Syene, which is ſituated under the tropic, thirty leagues to the ſouth.

I have the honor to be, &c.

minent rocks, to the right and left, is only fifty toiſes in width. This place is called Hajar Salſala, the ſtone of the chain, and it is thought a chain was formerly ſtretched acroſs the river. The rocks on the weſtern banks are hewn into grottos. Columns, pilaſters, and hieroglyphics, are ſeen; with a chapel cut into the hard ſtone. The waters, confined between the mountains, run with great rapidity, and the ſtream cannot be ſtemmed but with a favourable wind.

Paſſing Hajar Salſala, to the eaſt of the Nile, is Coum Ombo, at the foot of which mount are the ruins of a temple that aſcertain the ſcite of the ancient Ombos, where the inhabitants adored the crocodile. Theſe animals are exceedingly common about this height, and are ſeen deſcending in herds from the ſandy iſles, and ſwim and wind among the waters. It ſhould ſeem as if theſe dreadful reptiles had taken up their abode near the city where they received homage; but, in reality, they are more numerous here, than in other parts of Egypt, becauſe the banks of the Nile are, here, almoſt deſerted.

We drive near to Aſſouan, formerly Syene, which is to be the end of our voyage, and

and where I ſhall follow my uſual plan, firſt citing the deſcription the beſt writers of antiquity have given of theſe places, and, afterwards, adding an account of their preſent ſtate, and the changes they have undergone. No author has better deſcribed Syene and its environs than Strabo *(q)*. " Syene is a city " of Egypt, on the confines of Ethiopia; " fronting it is the iſland of Elephantina, " where there is a ſmall town, with the " temple of Cneph *(r)*, and a Nilometer, " that is to ſay, a well (or tube) formed " out of a ſingle ſtone, and placed on the " bank of the Nile, by which its degrees of " increaſe are meaſured; for the water of " this well riſes and falls with the river. " Lines drawn on the walls indicate the " moment of its increaſe, the time when it " is higheſt, and the intermediate degrees. " Men, whoſe buſineſs it is to obſerve the " riſing of the waters, proclaim it through- " out Egypt, that the year's increaſe may " be known; for, at a certain time, they " know, by infallible ſigns, how high the

(q) Strabo, lib. 17.

(r) An Egyptian deity, concerning which I ſhall hereafter ſpeak.

" Nile

" Nile will riſe, long before it begins to " overflow the lands. The governors of the " provinces are immediately informed, and " this intelligence is a guide to the huſband- " man concerning the diſtribution of the " waters, the raiſing of mounds, and the " cleanſing the canals. Officers appointed " to collect the tribute, proportion it to the " degree of inundation *(s)*.

" Syene ſtands immediately under the tro- " pic; a well is ſunk here, which marks " the ſummer ſolſtice, and the day on which " it happens is known when the ſtile of the " ſun-dial caſts no ſhade at noon. At that " inſtant, the vertical ſun darts his rays to " the bottom of the well, and his entire " image is deſcribed upon the water.

" Three cohorts, quartered in this city, " guard the limits of the Roman empire. " A little below Elephantina, a rock im- " pedes the bed of the river, and forms a " ſmall cataract. It is lower towards the " middle, ſo as to give paſſage to the wa- " ters; but its two ſides, riſing perpendi- " cularly, form two navigable channels,

(s) Egypt, at preſent, pays no tribute to the Grand Seignor when the Nile does not riſe to ſixteen cubits.

" which

" which boats eaſily paſs. The watermen " venture, in their ſlight boats, to truſt " themſelves to the rapid current, in the " middle of the cataract, and receive no " harm. Above is the iſle of Philæ, which " is common to Ethiopians and Egyptians: " the latter live in a ſmall town, much like " that of Elephantina for ſize and building. " It contains temples, in which the hawk " of Ethiopia is held ſacred."

The iſland of Elephantina, Sir, is half a league long, and half as wide. The city Strabo deſcribes no longer exiſts; but a ſmall village is built on its ruins, near which is a ſtately gate of granite, the entrance of the portico appertaining to the temple of Cneph, of which, likewiſe, a building, ſurrounded by thick walls and rubbiſh, made a part. A rampart, erected at one end of the iſland, ſecured it from inundation. The Nilometer, ſo well placed here, to determine the firſt increaſe of the waters, and regulate the labours of agriculture, is no longer to be found. According to Strabo's deſcription, we may ſuppoſe it was a chamber, like that of Mekias, in the iſland of Raouda, except that it was made from a ſingle ſtone; and, inſtead

inſtead of a column, divided into cubits and inches, the inundation was meaſured by lines drawn upon the wall. This Nilometer, cut from a block of marble, has ſcarcely been deſtroyed; it is probably buried beneath the ſands and mud of the Nile, whence it may be again recovered.

Four other iſlands ſurround that of Elephantina, which are nothing more than rocks of granite, from which thoſe enormous fragments have been cut, employed in conſtructing the grand edifices of Egypt. From one of theſe was that vaſt cube taken, each ſide meaſuring ſixty feet, in which the ſanctuary at Butis was cut *(t)*. Many thouſand workmen, according to hiſtory, were three years employed in taking it to its place of deſtination. It was the moſt enormous weight ever moved by human power.

Aſſouan, built eaſt of the Nile, is only a miſerable place, with a ſmall fort, commanded by an aga of the janiſſaries. The

(t) See Letters on Egypt, vol. I. Mr. Pocock has placed this vaſt ſtone in the temple of Minerva, at Sais; but this is a direct contradiction of Herodotus, who deſcribes it, and affirms he ſaw it at Butis, in the temple of Latona.

remains

remains of Syene are on an eminence to the ſouth. Columns and pillars of granite, ſcattered here and there, denote its ſcite. Here is an antient edifice, with apertures at the top, and windows facing the eaſt; perhaps, it was the obſervatory of the Egyptians: the ſolſtitial well might correſpond with one of its apertures, and the image of the ſun be reflected from the water at the bottom. The fact, atteſted by all antiquity, cannot be queſtioned, and, while it proves the aſtronomical knowledge of the Egyptians, ought to be regarded as one of the fineſt obſervations ever made by man. It is very aſtoniſhing that, for the ſpace of eighteen hundred years, no traveller has ſtopped at Syene, a few days before the ſummer ſolſtice, to ſeek this wonderful well, and verify ſo intereſting a diſcovery. For my own part, my fortune not being great, and having no aſſiſtance from government, I did not go ſo far up as this city, where it would have been neceſſary to have remained, at leaſt, a week; the journey is exceedingly expenſive, and there is no being ſafe from robbers, except by continual preſents to governors, and keeping janiſſaries in pay; therefore, inſtead of writing my own obſer-

obſervations, I have been obliged, with infinite labour, to recollect and verify thoſe of others. It is true I have received memorandums from individuals which have been of great ſervice to me, but it would have been much more agreeable to have examined for myſelf.

The cataract remains ſuch as it was deſcribed by Strabo; the rock in the middle of the river is bare, during ſix months of the year, and boats aſcend and deſcend on each ſide. In the time of inundation, the waters, collected between the mountains, form one ſole ſheet; and, flowing over the rock, have a fall of eleven feet. Boats can, then, no longer go againſt the ſtream, and their lading is obliged to be carried by land, two leagues above the cataract; though they deſcend as uſual, and ſhoot the gulph like an arrow from a bow: but the veſſels ought to be moderately loaded, and the men who ſit at the ſtern ſhould trim the boat exactly, otherwiſe they will be all ſwallowed up.

Weſt of Aſſouan, a road to Philæ is cut through the mountain, in the ſides of which immenſe quarries of granite are ſeen. Here Pocock obſerved obeliſks, and columns half

formed. They were cut from the ſides of the rock, and, when detached, drawn to the river, and tranſported on rafts to the place intended. The granite of theſe quarries, being ſpotted, red and grey, reſembles the column of Alexander Severus, is very hard, and capable of being finely poliſhed.

The Iſle of Philæ, only half a league in circumference, was inhabited in common by Ethiopians and Egyptians, but is now deſerted. It contains two magnificent temples, *(u)* the greateſt of which has courts, embelliſhed by colonnades. The entrance of the firſt is through a pyramidal gate, with an obeliſk of granite on each ſide. The temple within is divided into ſeveral apartments, and its marble walls preſent various rows of hieroglyphics, among which is the hawk deſcribed by Strabo. Eaſt of this edifice is another, in the form of a parallelogram, open on all ſides; the capitals of the columns, which ſupport its roof, are well ſculptured.

Here, from the confines of Egypt, let us caſt a glance over the country we have ſo lately

(*u*) Pocock's Travels. Norden's Travels through Egypt and Nubia.

traverſed.

traverſed. For the ſpace of two hundred leagues, we have ſeen a narrow valley, bounded to the right and left by two chains of mountains and hills. This plain, in its greateſt extent, except near Fayoum, is little more than ten leagues wide, but every where rich in native treaſures. The pyramids, extending from the neighbourhood of Giſa to Meidom, have firſt drawn our attention. Theſe magnificent ſepulchres, raiſed by the power of the Pharoahs, have not prevented us from paying our tribute of admiration to the remains of lake Mœris, dug for the happineſs of the people. Advancing, we find ſtately porticos and temples. The ruins of Thebes, with her hundred gates, next drew our attention, and raiſed our thoughts high as her own monuments; we at laſt approached Syene, never neglecting to remark the fine remains of antiquity we found in our route.

To what muſt we attribute the deſtruction of taſte and arts, under the ſame climate, on the ſame ſoil, amid the ſame abundance? To what but the loſs of liberty; and to government; which, at its will, ſinks or raiſes the genius of nations? Egypt, become

part

part of the Perſian empire, was ravaged two hundred years by Cambyſes and his ſucceſſors. This barbarous prince, by deſtroying the temples and colleges of the prieſts, extinguiſhed the ſacred fire they had kindled, during paſt ages, in this happy climate. While held in honour, they glorioufly cultivated every kind of human knowledge; deſpiſed, they loſt both their ſcience and their genius. Governed by the Ptolemies, this genius revived not; becauſe, fixing their reſidence at Alexandria, thoſe kings placed their confidence wholly in the Greeks, and diſdained the Egyptians. Become a Roman province, under Auguſtus, Egypt was held the granary of Italy; and agriculture and commerce only were encouraged. The ſovereigns of the lower empire, having embraced Chriſtianity, governed it with a rod of iron, and overthrew ſome of its fineſt edifices. The Arabs conquered it from the bigot Heraclius, occupied by his theological diſputes, and refuſing to ſend a ſingle ſhip to ſuccour Alexandria, though the inhabitants, for the ſpace of a year, implored his aſſiſtance. The rich library was burnt; a ſubject of eternal regret to the learned of all countries and all

ages. An ignorant and barbarous people were its laſt maſters; the Turks have, as much as in them lay, annihilated commerce, agriculture, and ſcience. After all theſe evils, after the revolution of ſo many ages, is there, Sir, a country ſtill to be found in poſſeſſion of ſo many antique monuments? Can the united world produce ſo many? This ſole reflection will give you an idea of the people who once inhabited this country, and of the perfection to which they carried the arts.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

THE OASES, THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER AMMON, AND THE ROUTES TO THEM, DESCRIBED.

Situation of the Oaſes determined by Ptolemy and the Arabian geographers. Deſcription of theſe places, habitable in the midſt of deſerts. The journey of Alexander to the temple of Jupiter Ammon: an account of the temple, and the people near it. Deſtruction of the army of Cambyſes ſent to pillage. The unfortunate expedition of this barbarous conqueror againſt the Ethiopians, and the loſs of part of his army. The Oaſes places of exile, under the ſovereigns of the lower empire, to which St. Athanaſius and others were ſent.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE deſcription of Egypt, Sir, would not be compleat, were I to ſuffer the Oaſes, dependant on the Thebais, to paſs unnoticed.

Strabo ſays (x), "Africa, according to hiſ-
"torians, and Cneius Piſo, who governed it,
"is like the ſpotted ſkin of the leopard, and
"ſcattered over with ſmall habitable places,
"which the Egyptians name Oaſes, ſur-
"rounded by deſerts."

Theſe remarkable places were known to the Arabian geographers, who call them Elouah. Abulfeda, their guide, deſcribes them as follows (y). "Elouah, dependant
"on the Saide, are a kind of iſlands in the
"midſt of ſands, and lie three days journey
"from the ſhores of the Nile, acroſs the
"deſert. Yacout enumerates three, and
"places them weſt of Upper Egypt, be-
"yond the mountains, parallel to the river;
"he adds, the firſt is highly cultivated, has
"many rivulets and hot ſprings, with fields
"covered by corn, and other ſurpriſing
"things, but that the people there are
"wretched." Here, Sir, we ſee the Oaſes of the Greeks. We partly know their diſtances from the Nile. Ptolemy thus fixes their latitude (z), the largeſt at

(x) Strabo, lib. 2.
(y) Deſcription of Egypt.
(z) Ptol. lib. 4.

26°.

26°. 30′. under the ſame parallel with Abydus, which the Arabs have named *El Berbi*, the temple, on account of the edifice found there; the ſecond at 25°. 45′. that is to ſay, facing Behneſa; and the moſt northerly at 29°. 30′. under the parallel of Lake Mæris. Let us now find near which of them the temple of Jupiter Ammon was built, and the route of Alexander will direct our ſearch. " Alexander having quelled Upper " Egypt (*a*), without making any alteration " in the form of government, reſolved to " go to the temple of Jupiter Ammon. " The road thither is almoſt impracticable, " the earth is without ſprings, the heavens " without water. Immenſe ſandy plains " are every where ſeen, which, continually " ſcorched by the ſun's rays, are intolerable " to the ſoles of the feet. A prey to " drought and heat, travellers are obliged " to croſs deep ſands; theſe, giving way at " every ſtep, render walking exceedingly " painful. The Egyptians exaggerated theſe " difficulties, but nothing could ſtop Alex- " ander, whoſe ardent deſires impelled him " to viſit the oracle of Jupiter. Not ſatis-

(*a*) Quin. Cur. lib. 4. cap. 7.

" fied with human greatneſs, he believed, or " would have had others believe, the god " was his father *(b)*. He and the perſons " choſen to accompany him went, by wa- " ter, as far as Lake Mareotis, and depart- " ed thence to accompliſh his purpoſe. The " two firſt days the fatigue was not very " great, they walked on a ſterile ſoil, but " had not yet entered the vaſt and naked " wilderneſs. As they proceeded they per- " ceived nothing around them but ſand on " ſand, without trees, plants, or the leaſt " trace of culture. In the midſt of theſe " parched deſerts, they, like ſailors, looked " earneſtly for land; the water which the " camels carried in ſkins was ſoon all gone, " and the loſs was irreparable in a place " where no ſprings could be found, and " where every thing was burnt up by the " ſun. In this extremity, whether it was " the effect of chance, or the benevolence " of the gods, the heavens were overſpread " with clouds, and the rain fell in torrents,

(b) Calliſthenes, according to Strabo, ſays that Alexander, when he undertook this voyage, wiſhed to imitate Perſeus and Hercules, who had done ſo before him.

" reſtoring

" reſtoring life to wretches expiring with
" thirſt, and ſinking under the exceſs of the
" heats. At laſt, after four days march,
" acroſs this fearful deſert, they arrived at
" the territory ſacred to Jupiter Ammon.
" What was their aſtoniſhment at finding,
" in a country ſurrounded by deſerts, foreſts
" whoſe thick ſhades were impenetrable to
" the ſun, brooks of excellent water, and a
" climate deliciouſly temperate, enjoying, all
" the year, the charms of ſpring and ſalu-
" brity!

" The inhabitants of theſe woods, named
" Ammonians, reſide in ſcattered huts. A
" triple wall, built in the centre of the
" grove, ſerved them as a citadel. The
" firſt encloſure contained the ancient palace
" of their kings; the ſecond, in which the
" temple ſtands, was appropriated to the
" women, children and concubines; and the
" warriors, appointed to defend this aſylum,
" dwelt in the third. The fountain of the
" ſun ran in another grove; in like manner,
" conſecrated to the oracle of Ammon. Its
" water is tepid in the morning, cool at
" noon, hot in the evening, and ſcalding at
" midnight. The ſtatue revered here does

" not reſemble the deities uſually formed by " ſculptors. Made of emeralds and precious " ſtones, it has the form of a ram, *(c)* from " the head to the waiſt. * When any one " wiſhes to conſult it, the prieſts bear it " in a gilded boat, to which, on each ſide, " are ſuſpended cups of ſilver. Matrons and " virgins follow, ſinging an uncouth hymn, " after an ancient cuſtom, by which they " believe Jupiter will be rendered propitious, " and return them a true anſwer."

Alexander departed from the lake Mareotis to go to this temple. The two firſt days he marched over a barren country, but where they did not ſink in; that is to ſay, he kept weſtward, on the ſea ſhore, for had he gone ſouth, or ſouth-weſt, he would immediately have entered a deſert covered with deep ſands.

(*c*) This idol has the form of a ram, becauſe that animal was conſecrated to Jupiter Ammon, a ſymbolical deity, ſignifying the ſun arrived at the ſign of Aries, or the Ram. The boat in which they carried it repreſented the veſſel in which the Egyptians placed the ſun, deſcribing his courſe through the zodiac. Theſe ſymbols will be explained in the following letters.

* The learned are aware of the various readings and doubts on this paſſage. T.

Seven or eight leagues from Parætonium, he entered the burning wilderneſs, in which he made a four days march, and then immediately took the direction of the habitation of the Ammonians, nearly following the dotted line traced upon the map. This I am perſuaded of, becauſe Ptolemy places the firſt Oaſis under the ſame parallel as lake Mæris; from which Oaſis Strabo *(d)* affirms the temple of Ammon was not far diſtant. Calliſthenes, who makes Alexander take his departure from Parætonium, does not wander far from our route; and it is poſſible the conqueror went to that city, and, afterwards, turned ſouth.

Strabo *(e)* ſays that, under the emperor Auguſtus, the Sibylline verſes, and the divinations of the Etruſcans, had deprived the oracle of Ammon of much of its credit. In the thirteenth century it was forgotten, but the Arabs aſſure us that country ſtill poſſeſſed inhabitants. From their writings it appears that the fountain of the ſun, which Quintus

(*d*) Strabo, lib. 17. Not the firſt, but third, according to Strabo, i. e. M. Savary has reverſed the order by ſome overſight. They are properly placed in the map. T.

(*e*) Strabo, ubi ſupra.

Curtius

Curtius deſcribes ſo marvellouſly, was only a hot ſpring, which had leſs heat during the day, and greater at night.

The Oaſes became places of exile under the monarchs of the lower empire, who, infatuated by Theology, a ſtudy which ſhould occupy only thoſe to whom religion has confided the ſacred truſt, and employed in cauſing ſometimes truth and ſometimes falſhood to triumph, ſent, by turns, heretics and orthodox believers hither. Neſtorius and St. Athanaſius were both exiles here. The Digeſt contains the following paſſage(*f*): "There is a kind "of exile which conſiſts in baniſhing the "guilty to the Oaſes of Egypt, where they "remain as in an iſland." St. Athanaſius, in his apology, complains of this barbarity. "The Arians," ſays he, "have outgone the "emperor's orders, in ſending old men and "biſhops amidſt theſe fearful deſerts. Thoſe "of Lybia, in the great Oaſis; and thoſe "of the Thebais, in the Oaſis of Ammon; "to the end that they may periſh in tra-"verſing burning ſands."

Theſe habitations, become famous by the baniſhment of the moſt learned men of the

(*f*) Lib. 48. tit. 22.

lower

lower empire, were little known to the Perſians. Cambyſes, having ravaged Egypt, wiſhed to ſeize the ſpoils of the temple of Jupiter Ammon. *(g)* "The troops he ſent "againſt the Ammonians departed from "Thebes, and came to the city of Oaſis, "inhabited by the Samians, of the tribe of "Æſchrionia, which country is ſeven days "march from the metropolis of Egypt, and "is called, by the Greeks, the iſle of the "bleſt. The army arrived there, as it is "ſaid, but the Ammonians only know what "became of them afterwards, for they were "never heard of more. They ſay that, "marching towards the temple of Jupiter, "as they went, they were buried under tor-"rents of burning ſands, which the ſouth "winds raiſed." The route of the army makes it plain the guides, who deteſted the Perſians, led them aſtray amidſt the deſert; for they ſhould have departed from the lake Mareotis to this temple; or from the environs of Memphis. The Egyptians, intending the deſtruction of their enemies, led them from Thebes to the great Oaſis, three days journey from Abydus, and, having brought

(*g*) Herodotus, lib. 3.

them

them into the vaſt ſolitudes of Lybia, they, no doubt, abandoned them, in the night, and delivered them over to death.

The Oaſis of Ammon is little known to the modern Egyptians, but the ſecond more ſo. Abulfeda places there a city, named Behneſa; *(b)* not the ſame Behneſa which ſtands on the canal of Joſeph, and which correſponds with the town of Achmounain, where there are magnificent antique remains. The great Oaſis, moſt frequented of the three, becauſe on the road which the caravans from Abyſſinia travel, has a great number of inhabitants. The Bey of Girga ſends a cachef, as governor, and to levy tribute. When the Abyſſinians leave Egypt, on their return, and have refreſhed themſelves in that fruitful valley, they proceed ſouth, and come to another, ſituated under the tropic, which the Geographer of Nubia thus deſcribes. "The country of Elouah, weſt of "Aſſouan, was formerly very populous, but "is no longer inhabited; here are many

(*b*) "Behneſa is a city, ſituated near the canal of "Joſeph. There is another city of this name, in the "country of Elouah, on the confines of the land of the "negroes." Abul. Deſ. of Egypt.

"ſprings,

" ſprings, rivulets, and fruit-trees, with cities " buried in their own ruins." Another part of the army of Cambyſes was deſtroyed, paſſing from this valley into Ethiopia. " Cam- " byſes *(i)*, being come to Thebes, choſe " fifty thouſand men whom he commanded " to pillage, and burn, the temple of Jupiter " Ammon. He himſelf marched againſt " the Ethiopians with the remainder of his " army; but, before he had proceeded one- " fifth of the way, his proviſions were all " exhauſted. They eat their horſes, but " this was a ſhort reſource. Had wiſdom " been his guide, this prince would have " returned; but, impelled by blind fury, he " went on. So long as the ſoldiers found " herbs and plants they fed on them; but, " this poor ſupport failing them in the midſt " of ſands, they caſt lots, and every tenth " man was devoured by his companions. " At this dreadful news, the Perſian king " abandoned his expedition into Ethiopia; " and, returning back, arrived at Thebes, " after the loſs of half his army *(k)*."

(*i*) Herodotus, lib. 3.

(*k*) It is very probable that here, as before, the guides miſled Cambyſes, who ſet fire to all the temples of Egypt.

What

What happens at preſent, in performing this journey, proves the event to be very credible. Travellers, departing from the fertile valley lying under the tropic, march ſeven days before they come to the firſt town in Ethiopia. They find their way, in the day time, by looking at marks; and, at night, by obſerving the ſtars. The ſand hills they had obſerved on the preceding journey having been often carried away by the winds, deceive the guides; and, if they wander the leaſt out of their road, the camels, having paſſed five or ſix days without drinking, ſink under their burthen, and die: the men are not long before they ſubmit to the ſame fate, and, ſometimes, out of a great number, not a ſingle traveller eſcapes; at others, the burning winds of the ſouth raiſe vortexes of duſt, which ſuffocate man and beaſt; and the next caravan ſees the ground ſtrewed with bodies, totally parched up. This horrid ſight, theſe dreadful dangers, do not terrify the Abyſſinians, who, from the earlieſt ages, have brought gold duſt, muſk, and elephants teeth into Egypt. So great is the power of habit over man!

I have the honor to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE INCREASE OF THE NILE.

Remarks on the Nile, its ſources, and the phænomena attending its overflowing. At what time the mound is opened at the head of the canal that leads to Grand Cairo. The feſtivals and rejoicings. Nocturnal excurſions, on the waters which fill the great ſquares of the capital; and the pleaſures they afford. What means might be employed to enſure a regular inundation over Egypt, and never-failing plenty.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Nile, Sir, is the moſt famous river on earth. Travellers, of all ages, have deſcribed the fecundity of its waters, with enthuſiaſm. Its ſeven mouths are celebrated by the Poets, and hiſtory is filled with the miracles its inundations produce. To the ancient people who, on its banks, nurtured and brought the infant arts to perfection, it

owes this celebrity: oppreſſed, as it were, by its bounties, they appointed feſtivals in its honour, and erected altars as to a god; or, at leaſt, as to the firſt of God's gifts. Had this river fed only Turks and Arabs, its name, like ſo many others, would have been known but in maps; its glory was united to that of a famous nation, and all the ends of the earth came to admire the works raiſed to contain it, and the immortal monuments erected on its borders.

Except the Egyptians, the ancients were all ignorant of its origin. A Portugueſe Jeſuit, in the laſt century, pretended he had made the diſcovery. His words are theſe: "In the province Sahala, weſt of the kingdom of *Goyam*, called by the inhabitants "*Agous*, are the ſources of the Nile. It "firſt flows from two deep ſprings, which "both lie high; the earth ſurrounding "them is boggy, and trembles under the "ſtep. The water ſpouts from the mountain with a noiſe like the exploſion of a "cannon. After proceeding ſome diſtance "through the valley, it receives a ſecond "rivulet, coming from the eaſt, and theſe, "united, direct their courſe north. Two other

" other torrents diſcharge themſelves into " them, and form a ſtream which joins the " river Yeman; after long circuits, eaſt and " weſt, theſe fall into a great lake; then, " leaving the lake, they form the river Nile, " which takes its haſty courſe toward the " Mediterranean."

Be this as it may, theſe waters would not be ſufficient for the general inundation which covers the earth for a ſpace of four hundred leagues, for it extends to Ethiopia; but, during the months, March, April, May, and June, the north winds drive the clouds toward the high mountains, beyond the Equator. Stopped by this barrier, clouds on clouds accumulate, till they deſcend in rain, which falls in torrents, and fills the vallies. The union of an innumerable multitude of rivulets forms the Nile, and produces the inundation. From the unanimous teſtimony of the Abyſſinians, who bring gold duſt to Grand Cairo, this river, taking it riſe in Ethiopia, divides into two branches, one of which, known by the name of Aſſerac, or the blue river, joins the Niger, and, traverſing Africa from eaſt to weſt, falls into

the Atlantic Ocean: the other, running north, between two chains of mountains, and meeting with the rocks of granite which impede its courſe, forms ſix cataracts, much more terrible than that of Syene, and theſe frightful waterfalls abſolutely impede its navigation; but, arrived at the firſt city in Egypt, it falls eleven feet, into the gulph itſelf has dug, and the perils of which the watermen dare face. Deſcending through this fine country, it fills the canals and lakes, overflows the lands, depoſits a fruitful ſlime, and diſcharges itſelf, as formerly, through ſeven mouths, into the Mediterranean.

The Nile's increaſe begins early in June, but is not much perceived till the ſummer ſolſtice; when the waters become troubled, of a reddiſh tincture, and are thought unwholſome. They muſt be purified before drank; which is done by mixing bitter almonds, pounded to duſt, in a jar full of water, and kept turning, with the arm, for ſome minutes: it is then left to ſettle, and, in five or ſix hours, the heterogenous particles ſubſide to the bottom of the veſſel, and the

the water becomes limpid and excellent *(l)*. The Egyptains attribute this fermentation of the Nile to the dew, which then falls in abundance. Many hiſtorians have ſeriouſly affirmed it contributed to the inundation. It is much more natural to think the river, overflowing in Abyſſinia and Ethiopia, brings down a great quantity of ſand, and millions of the eggs of inſects, which, hatching about the time of the ſolſtice, produce the fermentation of the waters, and that reddiſh tincture which renders them unhealthy.

The Nile continues increaſing till near the end of Auguſt, and, often, even, in September. The Nilometer at Elephantina formerly denoted to what degree the inundation would riſe. The experience of ages had afforded marks known to thoſe whoſe truſt it was to watch. The governors of the provinces were inſtantly informed, and the neceſſary labours for the good of agriculture were regulated accordingly. When

(*l*) I have made the ſame experiment, which I had ſeen practiſed in Egypt, on the waters of the Seine, when they were troubled, and yellow, and found the ſame conſequences; but it is neceſſary the veſſel ſhould be large to have the proper effect.

the Arabs conquered Egypt, the Nilometer was at the ſmall town of Halouan, facing Memphis. Amrou deſtroyed that ſtately capital, and built the city of Foſtat, where the governors of the Caliphs fixed their reſidence. Some ages after, the Mekias, or Nilometer, was built at one extremity of the iſland of Raouda, and the column to meaſure the waters was erected in the centre of a low chamber, the walls of which are exceedingly ſolid, and the bottom on a level with the bed of the Nile. The Mekias has never ſince been changed, and officers are now appointed to examine the progreſs of the inundation, which is daily proclaimed in the ſtreets of Cairo, by the public criers, to whom the people, intereſted in the event, give ſome ſlight reward, and it becomes the news of the day. As Egypt pays no tribute to the Grand Seignor if the waters do not riſe to ſixteen cubits, the Egyptians often diſguiſe the truth, and do not proclaim they have riſen to that height till they have ſurpaſſed it.

The day of this proclamation is a day of rejoicing, and a ſolemn feaſt among the Egyptians. The Pacha and his whole court deſcend

deſcend from the caſtle, and go in pomp to Foſtat, where the canal begins that runs through Grand Cairo. He places himſelf under a magnificent pavillion, erected there. The Beys, with their muſicians playing before them, and their Mamluks following, are his attendants. The chief prieſts ride horſes richly capariſoned, and all the inhabitants, on horſeback, on foot, and in boats, haſten to be preſent at this ceremony. More than three hundred thouſand people aſſemble on land and water. The boats, moſt of them painted, and artfully carved, have canopies, and ſtreamers of various colours. Thoſe of the women are known by their elegance, richneſs, the gilt columns that ſupport the canopy, and, particularly, by the blinds let down before the windows. The people all remain ſilent till the moment the Pacha gives the ſignal, and then, inſtantly, ſhouts of joy rend the air; the trumpets ſound their flouriſhes, and the kettle drums and other inſtruments reverberate from all parts. Certain men throw down the ſtatue of clay, which was placed on the mound, which ſtatue is called THE BETROTHED, and is the remains of an ancient rite among

the Egyptians, who conſecrated a virgin to the Nile, and whom, in times of dearth, they ſometimes threw into the waters. The mound is preſently deſtroyed, and the waters, no longer meeting an obſtacle, flow toward Grand Cairo. The Pacha throws gold and ſilver coins into the ſtream, which good ſwimmers immediately dive for, and bring up. This action may be regarded as a kind of homage paid to the Nile, the ſource of the wealth of Egypt. The inhabitants appear intoxicated with joy; they congratulate and pay compliments to each other all day; and ſongs of thankſgiving are every where heard. A number of female dancers aſſemble on the banks of the *Khalig*, and regale the ſpectators with their laſcivious dances. All is mirth and good chear, and the very poor themſelves feaſt. This univerſal rejoicing is not ſurpriſing: the fate of the country depends on the inundation, and, when it arrives, all behold the hopes of harveſt, the picture of plenty, and anticipate the promiſed good.

The evenings preſent a ſpectacle ſtill more agreeable. All the great ſquares of the city are floated, and the families aſſemble in boats adorned

adorned with tapeſtry, rich cuſhions, and every convenience luxurious eaſe can wiſh. The ſtreets, moſques, and minarets, are illuminated: they row from ſquare to ſquare, taking with them fruits and refreſhments. The moſt humerous aſſembly is uſually at Leſbekia, which is the largeſt ſquare in the city, and near half a league in circumference; it forms an immenſe baſon ſurrounded by the palaces of the Beys, which are embelliſhed with various coloured lights. Many thouſands of boats, to the maſts of which lamps are ſuſpended, produce an ever-varying illumination. The clear and ſtarry heavens, which, there, are ſeldom obſcured by miſts, and the profuſion of artificial lights on the waters, give all the brilliancy of day to the ſweet refreſhing coolneſs of night. Imagine, Sir, the pleaſure with which the people, who have been ſcorched twelve hours by a ſun ſo ardent, come and breath the cool air of theſe lakes: ſeldom are the charms of this nocturnal ſcene diſturbed by impetuous winds; they fall at ſun-ſet, and gentler airs agitate the atmoſphere. I own the caprice of Oriental manners is a tax on the European. Men aſſociate only with

men, and women with women; the charm of whoſe ſociety is here procured with difficulty. The diſguiſe neceſſary, and the attendant dangers, warn the reaſon, and compel prudence. The lamps are obliged to be always kept lighted; this is a precaution neceſſary for the public ſafety, which the Oualli, who goes from place to place, takes care to ſee punctually obſerved. If this officer, who ſuperintends the police, finds a boat without light, he is juſtified in beheading all the perſons on board; and, unleſs a ſuitable preſent reſtrains the arm of the executioners who accompany him, he inſtantly, and rigouroufly, executes his right.

When the Ramazan happens during the inundation, this month, ſo dreadful to the poor, is a time of continual banquetting among the rich, who paſs their nights feaſting on the waters. During the day they ſleep in a vaſt hall, where pure air circulates near a marble baſon; where a fountain of limpid water plays, and the brinks of which are ſurrounded by the Arabian jaſmine and odoriferous flowers. The ſalubrity of this apartment is maintained by a north window always open, near the ſummit of the dome: thus, while

while the huſbandmen broil in the fields, bedewing the earth with the ſweat of their brow, the rich paſs their time in voluptuous ſlumbers, amidſt cooling airs, and the balſamic exhalations of plants. The utmoſt ambition of a Turk, who is not in place, is to live agreeably, and wholly free from cares; but the Beys, on the contrary, preyed upon by fear, placed at the head of a republic impoveriſhed by their devaſtations, dazzle for a moment, then diſappear, cut off by the ſword of their colleagues, or the poiſon of their ſlaves.

Egypt has for numerous ages, been inundated, which has prodigiouſly raiſed the ſoil; this fact is atteſted by obeliſks, buried fifteen or twenty feet, and porticos that have half diſappeared. Their ancient cities, built on artificial mounts, and the mounds they raiſed, ſhewed the Egyptians dreaded the high inundations. At preſent the land is ſo much higher that the waters ſeldom riſe ſo as to injure agriculture. When they are under ſixteen cubits a famine is threatened, and the years of abundance are thoſe of between eighteen and two-and-twenty cubits. When the waters exceed this, they lay too long

long on the ground, and prevent its being ſown; which, however, ſeldom happens. On the contrary, inundations below the medium often leave the high lands fruitleſs. Were the canals opened, the mounds repaired, and the great reſervoirs filled, they might water a much larger extent of country, and procure harveſts infinitely more abundant.

It would be poſſible to enſure a regular inundation to Egypt, and a never-failing fertility; but this muſt be by conquering Ethiopia, or forming a treaty with its inhabitants, by which they might be permitted to confine the waters of the Nile, where they diſperſe themſelves over the ſands that lie to the weſt.

" In the year 1106, when Elmeſtanſor " was Sultan of Egypt, the inundation to- " tally failed. The Sultan ſent Michael, " patriarch of the Jacobines, with magnifi- " cent preſents, to the Emperor of Ethio- " pia, who came to meet, received him " favourably, and demanded the ſubject of " his embaſſy. Michael replied, that the " waters of the Nile having failed, had " made the Egyptians dread all the horrors " of famine, and thrown them into the ut-

" moſt

" moſt conſternation: he added remon-
" ſtrances which induced the Emperor to
" ſuffer a dam to be opened that had turned
" the river, which, taking its uſual courſe,
" roſe three cubits in one day. Michael, on
" his return, received great honors *(m)*."

This ſhews the poſſibility of turning the courſe of the Nile, and proves a mound, raiſed to ſtop up the great channel which communicates with the Niger, would cauſe a prodigious increaſe of water. Were a powerful and intelligent people in poſſeſſion of Egypt, ſuch wonderful changes would be eaſily made, and it would become the wealthieſt country in the world. The Egyptians have a certain ſign of inundation, and the height to which it will riſe. When the north wind, during the months I have before mentioned, repelled by impetuous winds from the ſouth, is driven back, the aſſemblage of clouds is leſs than uſual in Upper Abyſſinia, and the increaſe is very ſmall; mounds then would be of the greateſt utility; but, on the contrary, when the north wind

(m) Elmacin, hiſtory of the Arabs. This happened under Aboulcaſem, the twenty-ſeventh of the Abaſſide Caliphs, and the forty-eighth from Mahomet.

is predominant, and repels the tempeſtuous ſouth towards the equator, it brings heavy clouds, and there is a certainty of a favourable inundation: in this caſe it would be neceſſary to open the dams of Ethiopia, and give the ſuperabundant waters their uſual vent. By means of this augmentation, alſo, there might be a canal between Cophtos and Coſſeir, which would be ranked among the moſt famous, and the moſt uſeful, works of Egypt. Theſe, Sir, are ideas thrown into the expanſe of poſſibility; they perhaps may hereafter be realized. Various powers look with watchful eyes on this fine kingdom, governed by barbarians incapable of defending it; the firſt nation, therefore, that attacks will conquer it, and then there can be little doubt but its face will be changed.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT.

The government of Egypt, ſince its conqueſt by the Arabs, and the various revolutions it has undergone. Articles of the treaty granted by Sultan Selim, to the Circaſſian Mamluks. The limited power of the Pachas, and the preponderance of that of the Beys; particularly in the dignity of Sheik Elbalad and Emir Hadgi. The manner in which the Ottoman governors are received, and the diſgrace with which they are ſent back. Obſervations on the decline of the Ottoman authority in Egypt.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I Promiſed to ſend you particulars concerning the government of Egypt, ſo little known in France, and hope the obſervations of ſeveral years will enable me to fulfil this promiſe. It will firſt, however, be neceſſary to begin by an introductory account, which will throw light on what I have to offer.

From

From the middle of the ſeventh century to 1250, the Arabs were in poſſeſſion of Egypt, which then was a part of the vaſt empire of the Caliphs. Vizirs governed it in their name, and, poſſeſſed of unbounded power, exerciſed ſupreme authority. They had the right of life and death, and, rendering an account to the Caliphs, only, of their conduct, governed the country according to their caprice. However great their tyranny, the cries of the oppreſſed people never could reach the throne; the Vizirs took care to gain thoſe who ſurrounded it by rich preſents. The government being thus deſpotic, national happineſs, or miſery, depended on the virtues, or vices, of one man. Many of theſe Vizirs ſwayed an iron ſceptre; ſome few made commerce, agriculture, and the arts flouriſh. Others, among whom was the famous Ebn Toulon, rebelled, and proclaimed themſelves kings; but the crown ſeldom deſcended to their children. After the death of the rebel, the province returned to the dominion of its former maſters.

In the year 982, Moaz, ſovereign of the weſtern part of Africa, and deſcendant of the fatimite Caliphs, who had founded a king-

dom

dom there two centuries before, ſent his generals to conquer Egypt, which having performed, he made it the ſeat of Empire. His offspring reigned till 1189, when Salah Eddin eſtabliſhed the dynaſty of the Ayoubites there. This warlike prince, the terror of the cruſaders, whom he had almoſt driven out of Paleſtine, was overthrown by Richard Cœur de Lion, near the walls of St. John d'Acre; and the name of the Engliſh monarch became terrible throughout the eaſt. The government of Salah Eddin, and his ſucceſſors, was monarchical, under whom Egypt became flouriſhing. The remains of the academies they founded, and to which by their rich benefactions they drew the learned men of the eaſt, are ſtill to be ſeen at Grand Cairo. In the year 1250, immediately after the defeat of Louis IX. the Baharite Mamluks,*(n)* Turks by deſcent, maſſacred Touran Shah, the laſt prince of the Ayoubites, and the ſon of Nejem Eddin, their benefactor; with whom ended the reign of the Arabian

(*n*) Mamluk ſignifies acquired, poſſeſſed. They called themſelves *Baharites*, or maratime, becauſe Nejem eddin, who inſtituted them, beſtowed the government of caſtles near the ſea, and in the iſland of Raouda, on them.

princes

princes over Egypt, and ſince which they have ever been governed by foreigners.

The Baharite Mamluks changed its form of government, and made it republican. Their principal men elected a chief, to whom they confided great authority. He had a right to make war or peace, firſt adviſing with his council, the members of which they themſelves were. He could appoint miniſters, ambaſſadors, governors, and generals; provided he choſe them from among the Mamluks. The neceſſity he was under of gaining the votes of thoſe chiefs limited his power; and his politics conſiſted in procuring their favour, making ſure of the moſt powerful, and in immediately cruſhing the conſpiracies that were formed againſt him; for each of the powerful Mamluks, of this Ariſtocracy, would neceſſarily endeavour to depoſe the poſſeſſor, and ſeat himſelf on the throne. Though the people had no part in the government, yet had the Prince cauſe to fear their diſcontent: an ambitious rival, aided by them, might deprive him of his crown. Thus we ſee the chief of this republic was ſurrounded by dangers; the duration of his empire depended on his perſonal qualities,

and

and he could not tranſmit his power to his children. Hence, during the hundred and thirty-ſix years the Baharite Mamluks governed Egypt, they had twenty-ſeven kings; a proof their reigns were ſhort and tempeſtuous.

About the middle of the fourteenth century, the Circaſſian Mamluks dethroned the Baharites, but preſerved their form of government, and continued in poſſeſſion of Egypt till the conqueſt of it by Sultan Selim, in 1517. It is neceſſary to give clear and preciſe ideas of the Mamluks before we ſpeak of the changes Selim made in the conſtitution. The appellation Mamluk is beſtowed on children who, carried off by merchants, or banditti, from Georgia, Circaſſia, Natolia, and the various provinces of the Ottoman Empire, are afterwards ſold in Conſtantinople and Grand Cairo. The Grandees of Egypt, who had a ſimilar origin, bring them up in their houſes, and deſtine them to ſucceed to their dignities; and this cuſtom is, perhaps, more ancient than the time of Joſeph, who, ſold thus to Potiphar (o), High-prieſt of

(o) This Egyptian name comes from *Potiphrai*, prieſt of the ſun.

of Cachef *(q)*, when they govern the towns which are dependant on their patrons, at which time they are permitted to buy Mamluks, who follow their fortune, and become their companions and inſtruments. Their next riſe is to the dignity of Bey, which gives them a ſeat among the four and twenty members of the Divan, or council, of the republic: but, though thus advanced, they ceaſe not to regard themſelves as the ſervants of their firſt maſter, and preſerve a perfect ſubmiſſion to him. Such, Sir, is the origin of the Mamluks; and ſuch the career they have to run. We will now proceed with our narrative.

Sultan Selim, having conquered Egypt, and overthrown the Circaſſian Mamluks, who could not withſtand the numerous armies and bloody battles of the Turkiſh Emperor, cauſed their king, Thomam Bey, to be hanged at one of the gates of Cairo. This barbarous action diſguſted them ſo much that they only waited the departure of the Turks again to take to their arms. The

(*q*) The Cachefs are the lieutenants of the Beys, and command the towns which are in the government of their patrons.

intoxication

intoxication of ſucceſs once diſſipated, Selim perceived his error; and, that he might profit by this important conqueſt, endeavoured to gain the good-will of the Mamluks; in order to which he made very little change in their form of government, and granted them very peculiar privileges, ſpecified in a treaty, the principal articles of which are as follow.

Though, with Almighty aid, our invincible arms have conquered the kingdom of Egypt, yet we, from our benevolence, grant the four and twenty Sangiaks (r), of this country, a republican government, on the following conditions.

I. The republic of Egypt ſhall acknowledge our ſovereignty, and that of our ſucceſſors; and, as a mark of obedience, ſhall honor, as our repreſentative, the governor whom we ſhall pleaſe to ſend, and who ſhall reſide in the caſtle of Grand Cairo. During his adminiſtration, he ſhall undertake nothing contrary to our will, or the intereſts of the republic; but ſhall adviſe with the Beys concerning the good of the ſtate; and, ſhould he become diſagreeable to them, or

(r) Sangiaks has the ſame meaning as Beys.

attempt to infringe their privileges, we authoriſe them to ſuſpend him, and lay their complaints before our ſublime Porte, that they may be delivered from his oppreſſion.

II. In time of war, the republic ſhall be obliged to furniſh us and our ſucceſſors with twelve thouſand men, commanded by Sangiaks, and maintain them till the concluſion of peace.

III. Each year the republic ſhall raiſe five hundred and ſixty thouſand Aſlani *(s)*, and ſend them, under the eſcort of a Bey, to our ſublime Porte, who ſhall receive, from our Defterdar, (Treaſurer) a legal acquittance, to which our ſeal, and that of our Vizir, ſhall be affixed.

IV. The republic ſhall raiſe the like Khaſna (ſum) of five hundred and ſixty thouſand Aſlani for the ſupport of Medina, and the caaba, or temple of Mecca, which ſhall be annually ſent, under the eſcort of

(s) This ſum has been increaſed to eight hundred thouſand Aſlani; but the Beys pretend they are obliged to be at exceſſive expences, in repairing canals and fortreſſes, and do not ſend the half to Conſtantinople. Aſlani is a ſilver coin, worth about half a crown.

the

the Sheik El Balad *(t)*, or the Emir Hadge, which they ſhall deliver to the Scherif, the ſucceſſor of our prophet, for the ſervice of the houſe of God, and to be diſtributed among the perſons who reſide there, that their prayers may be obtained for us, and the faithful who believe in the Koran. *(u)*.

V. The republic ſhall only maintain, in time of peace, fourteen thouſand ſoldiers, or janiſſaries, but ſhall have permiſſion to augment that army, during war, that its enemies, and ours, may be oppoſed.

VI. The republic ſhall alſo deduct, from the productions of the country, a million of couffes *(x)* of grain, ſix hundred thouſand of wheat, and four hundred thouſand of barley, to be laid up in our granaries.

VII. Theſe articles obſerved, the republic ſhall enjoy abſolute power over the inhabitants of Egypt; but, in religious matters,

(*t*) *Sheik El Balad*, the Elder of the country, is the title of the Bey who is at the head of the republic. *Emir Hadge* ſignifies Prince of the caravan, and is the ſecond dignity in the republic.

(*u*) This ſum is not raiſed in money, but corn, and the productions of Egypt.

(*x*) An oval panier, made of date-tree leaves, containing about a hundred and ſeventy pounds weight.

ſhall adviſe with the Mollah, or High prieſt, who ſhall be ſubject to our authority, or that of our ſucceſſors.

VIII. The republic ſhall enjoy, as heretofore, the right of coining, and ſtamping the name Maſr (y); but ſhall add thereto our name, or that of our ſucceſſors, and the governor we ſend ſhall inſpect the coinage, that the legend may not be altered.

IX. The Beys ſhall elect among themſelves a Sheik El Balad; who, when confirmed by our governor, ſhall be their head, and acknowledged by our officers as chief of the republic. If it ſhall ſo happen that our governors ſhall become guilty of oppreſſion, and exceed the limits of his power, the Sheik El Balad ſhall have a right to lay the complaints of the public before our ſublime Porte. Should foreign enemies diſturb the peace of the republic, we promiſe, for us and our ſucceſſors, to protect it, with all our powers, without having a right to exact any indemnity for the expence incurred in its aid.

(y) *Maſr* is the name the Arabs give to Egypt in general, and Grand Cairo in particular, pretending that this country was peopled by Miſraim, grandſon of Noah.

Done

Done and ſigned, by our clemency, in favour of the republic of Egypt, in the year 887, of the Hegira, (A. D. 1517.)

From this treaty you will learn, Sir, the laſt change of Egyptian government partook of Monarchy and Ariſtocracy. The firſt in the perſon of a Pacha, the ſecond in thoſe of the Beys, who, eſſentially, compoſe the republic. The Pacha, properly ſpeaking, is a phantom, diſpelled by their breath. The Sangiaks, at the head of provinces and armies, in reality, enjoy all the power; to their mercy are the people abandoned, in whoſe favour the treaty contains not one word. May we not ſay a merchant ſold three or four millions of ſlaves, to four and twenty foreigners, for five hundred and ſixty thouſand aſlani? Abſolute power is conſigned over to them. They are permitted to levy arbitrary tributes, and exerciſe, without reſtraint, every ſpecies of tyranny. Thus do deſpots barter nations! Thus do they ſubmit to ſuch ſhame, and think not of reclaiming the ſacred rights they have received from nature! Selim, in the vaſt extent of his dominions, ſaw but a vile herd of ſlaves, whom he might diſpoſe of at his pleaſure.

The

The Beys perfectly feel the power they poſſeſs, which they dreadfully abuſe. The Pacha remains no longer than while he is ſubſervient to their deſigns; ſhould he dare ſpeak in defence of his maſter's intereſts, or thoſe of the Egyptians, he becomes a ſtate criminal: the Divan aſſembles, and he is expelled. The following is the manner in which they receive, and eject, thoſe repreſentatives of the Grand Seignior.

When a new Pacha lands, at Alexandria, he gives notice of his arrival to the council of the republic, and the Sheik El Balad ſends the Beys of moſt addreſs to compliment him, bring him preſents, and profeſs great ſubmiſſion. While they attend on him they artfully ſound his inclinations, ſtudy his character, and endeavour to learn, from his own mouth, or that of his officers, what are the orders he brings. Should they find them inimical to their own purpoſes, they expedite a courier to the Sheik El Balad, who aſſembles the Divan, and the Pacha is forbidden to proceed farther. They then write to the Grand Signor that the new governor comes with hoſtile intentions, and ſuch as will excite rebellion among his faithful ſubjects, and requeſt

requeſt his recall, which is ſure to be complied with. When the chiefs of the republic believe they have nothing to fear from the Pacha, they invite him to Grand Cairo; the deputies place him in a ſumptuous galley, and eſcort him all the way. The attendant boats are all elegantly tilted, and ſeveral filled with muſicians. He advances, ſlowly, at the head of the fleet, no veſſel being ſuffered to paſs that of the Pacha. Thoſe who are, unfortunately, making a voyage up the Nile, are obliged to follow in his ſuite. He ſtops at Hellai (z), and the Sheik El Balad either comes himſelf to receive him, or deputes ſeveral Sangiaks. The heads of the republic again congratulate him on his landing; the Aga of the Janiſſaries preſents him the keys of the caſtle, prays him to make it his reſidence, and he is conducted, in pomp, through the city. I have ſeen, and can therefore deſcribe, the entrance of a Pacha.

The various corps of infantry, with their noiſy muſick, march firſt, in two files, their colours waving; the cavalry follows. About five or ſix thouſand horſemen advance in good order, their cloathing made of very

(z) A ſmall village, half a league below Boulac.

bright

bright ſtuffs, while their floating robes, enormous muſtachoes, and long lances, of ſhining ſteel, give them a majeſtic and warlike air. Then come the Beys, magnificently cloathed, and attended by their Mamluks, mounted on Arabian horſes, high mettled, and adorned with houſings, embroidered in gold and ſilver; the bridles of thoſe of the chiefs are bedecked with fine pearls and precious ſtones, and their ſaddles with glittering gold. The various retinues, for each Bey had his own, were exceedingly elegant; the beauty of the youth, the richneſs of their habits, and their excellent horſemanſhip, all together formed a very agreeable ſight. The Pacha cloſed the march, advancing gravely, preceded by two hundred horſemen, a band of muſic, and four led horſes, ſlowly guided by ſlaves on foot, covered with houſings, moſt richly embroidered in gold and pearl, that trailed on the ground. The Pacha, mounted on a beauteous barb, wore a cluſter of large diamonds in his turban, which darted back the ſun's rays. This proceſſion gave me an idea of the oriental pomp and magnificence of the ancient monarchs of Aſia, when they ſhewed themſelves in public. It began about eight, and laſted till noon. On

On the morrow, the Pacha aſſembled the Divan, and invited the Beys to be preſent: he ſat on a raiſed ſeat with a barred window, like the Grand Seignor. His Kiaya, or Lieutenant, read the orders of the Porte, and the Sangiaks, profoundly bowing, promiſed obedience in all things which ſhould not infringe their rights. This ended, a collation was ſerved; and, when the aſſembly roſe, the Pacha preſented the Sheik El Balad with a rich furred robe, and a horſe magnificently harnaſſed; alſo caftans to the other Beys. Such, Sir, is the inſtallation of a Pacha.

His office is a kind of baniſhment: he cannot leave his palace without the permiſſion of the Sheik El Balad, but is a ſtate priſoner, who, in the midſt of ſplendor, cannot avoid feeling the weight of his chains. His revenue amounts to near a hundred and twenty-five thouſand pounds ſterling, and is raiſed from the duties paid at Suez, on the merchandize of the Red Sea. The ambition of the Beys preſents him with a fruitful ſource of wealth; when, poſſeſſing political cunning, and a knowledge of his own means, he has the art to ſow diſſention among the chiefs

chiefs and form parties. Each will then endeavour to obtain his intereſt, and wealth pours in upon him. The Sangiaks named by the Divan alſo purchaſe a confirmation of their dignity of the Pacha, and the inheritance of thoſe who die without iſſue increaſes his treaſury. Thus may the Grand Seignor's repreſentative maintain himſelf in office, and become immenſely rich, provided he proceeds with the utmoſt circumſpection; for, the ground on which he ſtands is ſo ſlippery, the leaſt wrong ſtep occaſions his fall; and unforeſeen circumſtances will often counteract his utmoſt policy. Should ſome young audacious Sangiak, by his crimes or courage, vanquiſh the party favoured by the Pacha, and arrive at the dignity of Sheik El Balad, he aſſembles the council, and the governor is ignominiouſly expelled. His order to depart is entruſted to an officer, cloathed in black, who, carrying it in his boſom, advances into the audience-chamber, and taking up a corner of the carpet which covers the ſofa, bows profoundly, and ſays, *Inſel Pacha*; Pacha come down; which having ſaid he departs. The Governor is immediately obliged to pack up and retire,

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in the ſpace of four-and-twenty hours, to Boulac; where he waits for orders from Conſtantinople. His perſon is generally ſafe; but, ſhould the prevailing Beys have complaints againſt him, they make him render a ſevere account of his adminiſtration, and the preſents he has received; after which they divide the ſpoil. The council of the republic elects a Caimakan, during the interregnum, to ſupply his place, till the arrival of the new Pacha. I have been ſeveral times a witneſs of events like this, during my abode in Egypt. I hope what I have ſaid will give you ſome knowledge of the government of the country. The hiſtory of Ali Bey, and ſome others of his ſucceſſors, a ſketch of which I ſhall ſend you in the following letters, will ſhew you theſe objects in action, and ſupply you with the means of drawing your own concluſions.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER X.

HISTORY OF ALI BEY.

Birth of Ali Bey; is carried off: changes his religion, when ſold to a Bey of Grand Cairo: promoted to various offices in the ſtate. He conducts the caravan: defeats the Arabs: is made a Bey, and takes his ſeat in the Divan: his patron aſſaſſinated by the contrary faction: arrives at the dignity of Sheik El Balad, and revenges his patron's death: league formed againſt him: eſcapes to Jeruſalem and St. John d'Acre, where he is welcomed by Sheik Daher: is recalled, but the hatred of his enemies again compels him to ſave himſelf by flight: viſits Arabia: retires to St. John d'Acre, where Sheik Daher gives him every proof of friendſhip: returns to Cairo: ſacrifices his rivals to revenge, and governs wiſely. Treachery of ſome Beys and the grand Porte: executes the officers ſent to demand his head, and combines with the Ruſſians to take vengeance on the injuſtice of the Ottomans. Repels the

wandering Arabs: protects commerce, and conquers Arabia and Syria by his generals. Betrayed by his ſon-in-law, Mahamet Abou Dahab, and is obliged, a third time, to ſave himſelf in Syria. Seizes on ſeveral towns: enters Egypt with an army: overthrows forces much ſuperior to his own, and is vanquiſhed by the perfidy of his infantry, which goes over to Abou Dahab. Deaths of Ali, Mahamet, and Sheik Daher; the latter baſely aſſaſſinated, by order of the Porte.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

ALI BEY, born in Natolia, in 1728, was chriſtened *Youſeph* (Joſeph). His father, Daoud *(a)*, a Greek prieſt, of one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed families in the country, intended him as the ſucceſſor of his dignities, and neglected nothing to perfect his education. Fate, however, otherwiſe ordained. Joſeph, at thirteen, born away by the ardor of youth, hunted with ſome young men in a neighbouring foreſt, who, being attacked by banditti, were carried off in ſpite of their cries and reſiſtance. He was brought to

(*a*) i. e. David.

Grand Cairo, ſold to Ibrahim Kiaya (*b*), Lieutenant of the Janiſſaries, who had him circumciſed, put him on a Mamluk habit, and called him Ali, a name he has ſince been known by. He appointed maſters to teach him horſemanſhip, Turkiſh, and Arabic. Obliged to obey, Joſeph, in his heart, lamented the loſs of his parents, and the change of his religion. The kind treatment of his patron, the offices he was appointed to, which flattered his ſelf-love, and, eſpecially, the example of his companions, inſenſibly reconciled him to his new ſtate. He was ſoon diſtinguiſhed by his underſtanding; and, in a few years, was perfect maſter of the languages he had been taught, excelled in bodily exerciſe, and none of the Mamluks managed a horſe with more addreſs, threw the javelin more forcibly, or handled the ſabre and fire-arms with greater dexterity. His engaging manners, and application to ſtudy, endeared him to Ibrahim, who, delighted with his talents, raiſed him rapidly through the various offices of his houſhold,

(*b*) The Kiaya, and the Aga of the Janiſſaries, that is to ſay, their Lieutenant, and their Colonel, are Beys; and, uſually, very powerful.

ſo

ſo that he preſently was made Selictar-Aga, (ſword-bearer) and Khaznadar (treaſurer); and the manner in which he executed theſe offices placed him ſtill higher in the favor of his patron, who created him Cachef at two-and-twenty.

Become a governor of cities, he ſoon demonſtrated his natural love of juſtice, and his diſcernment in his choice of Mamluks, whom he endeavoured to inſpire with his own genius. From this time he ſilently laid the foundation of his future grandeur; not only had he gained the affection of Ibrahim, but inſinuated himſelf into the favour of the Pacha, judging this might be ſubſervient to his ambitious deſigns. Rahiph, the Pacha, was a man of merit; and, diſtinguiſhing an upright and elevated mind in the young Cachef, granted him his friendſhip, and became his declared protector: had not an unforeſeen cataſtrophe deranged his projects, he would ſoon have promoted him to the dignity of Bey. Rahiph, endowed with that happy kind of character which irreſiſtibly charms, had gained the confidence of the Beys. Far from imitating his predeceſſors, who founded their authority on diſ-

ſenſion, he uſed every effort to maintain peace and union; and, for the firſt time, the repreſentative of the Grand Seignor and the heads of the government united for the public good. The people, enjoying peace, wiſhed its duration. The Beys themſelves loved the Pacha, and dreaded his recal. Nothing more was wanting to arm envy, that monſter of the human heart, which, unhappily for men, ſheds her venom over all parts of the earth. The council of the Divan, at Conſtantinople, repreſented the good intelligence maintained between the Pacha and the chiefs of the republic as a conſpiracy, formed to deprive the Grand Seignor of Egypt. Their calumnies were ſpecioufly coloured, and ſpecious reaſons are often convincing, in a court. Without farther examination, the Sultan, determining to try the fidelity of Rahiph, ſent a firman, commanding him to put all the Beys to death he could get into his power. An order ſo iniquitous well might ſhock the Pacha, but he muſt either obey or loſe his head. He heſitated three days, and at laſt choſe the former. Sending for the moſt faithful of his ſlaves, he ſhewed them the firman, and commanded

commanded them each to kill a Bey, when they ſhould be aſſembled in the hall of audience; and, the Divan being called, having concealed ſwords under their robes, they aſſaſſinated thoſe unfortunate victims of calumny. Four were left dead; the others, having been only wounded, valiantly defended themſelves, and eſcaped. The marble of the hall where they were murdered is red with their blood to this day. I have often, ſhuddering, beheld the marks of this barbarous execution, commanded on ſuſpicion only, by a deſpotic government.

The aſtoniſhment of the Sangiaks who had fled was extreme; nor could they account for an action ſo atrocious from the paſt conduct of Rahiph. The aſſembled council reſolved to puniſh and expiate the outrage he had done the republic by his death; but, when they came to ſeize the culprit, he produced the firman of the Porte, and they remained ſatisfied by his immediate expulſion. The Pachalic of Natolia, of Damaſcus, and, at laſt, the high poſt of Grand Viſir, were the rewards of his crime.

This melancholy event retarded the riſe of Ali Bey, who remained a Cachef ſeveral

years. His patron, having been elected Emir Hadge, or prince of the caravan, the ſecond dignity in Egypt, took him with him to eſcort the pilgrims. They were attacked on their march by the Arabs, and Ali, at the head of the Mamluks, fell upon them with ſo much valour that they fled, leaving a great number dead on the field. At their return, ſeveral Arab tribes aſſembled to revenge their former defeat. The young Cachef gave them battle, furiouſly penetrated the thickeſt of their ſquadrons, and, overthrowing all who oppoſed him, obtained a ſignal victory. The Arabs appeared no more; and Ibrahim, in full council, ſpoke of the ſervices of his lieutenant, and propoſed to create him a Bey. This met with oppoſition, from Ibrahim the Circaſſian, the enemy of the former, who employed all his eloquence to prevent a nomination which gave him umbrage. The Emir prevailed; the Divan elected Ali, and Eddin Mohamed, the Pacha, confirmed their choice, cloathed him in a caftan, and, according to cuſtom, gave him the firman of Bey.

Become one of the twenty-four members of the republic, he never forgot his gratitude

to

to his patron, but defended his intereſts with admirable conſtancy, who, however, was aſſaſſinated, in 1758, by the faction of Ibrahim the Circaſſian. From that moment Ali meditated vengeance; but for three years carefully concealed his reſentment of the murder, and employed every means to obtain the poſt of Shiek El Balad, the firſt office in the republic. This dangerous wiſh and his utmoſt ambition were gratified in 1763.

He ſoon after revenged the death of his patron, by killing Ibrahim the Circaſſian, with his own hand. Hatred, rather than prudence, impelled him to commit this deſperate action, which raiſed him up many enemies. All the Sangiaks attached to the Circaſſian conſpired againſt him, and he was on the point of falling into their ſnares, and being maſſacred in his turn: he ſaved himſelf by flight. Haſtily traverſing the deſerts of the iſthmus of Suez, he came to Jeruſalem, where, having gained the friendſhip of the governor, he thought himſelf in ſafety; but friendſhip itſelf is no longer held ſacred among the Turks when the deſpot commands. Fearing him, even in his exile, his enemies wrote to the Porte to demand his life, and an

order was diſpatched to the governor for his head. Happily for him, Rahiph, his old friend, one of the members of the Divan, informed him in time, and adviſed ſudden flight. Ali foreſaw the arrival of the Capigi Bachi *(c)*, and took refuge with the Sheik Daher, Prince of St. John d'Acre. This reſpectable ſire, who had defended his ſmall principality fifty years againſt the whole Ottoman force, received the unfortunate Sheik El Balad with open arms, and granted him that hoſpitality which is the precious pledge of ſafety among men, and the ſanctity of which the Arabs never violate. He ſoon perceived the capacity of his gueſt, moſt kindly careſſed and called him his ſon; exhorted him to ſupport adverſity with fortitude; encouraged his hopes, calmed his griefs, and made him happy even in diſgrace. Ali Bey might have lived peaceably with Sheik Daher; but, preyed upon by ambition, he could not remain thus at eaſe. He maintained a ſecret correſpondence with ſome Sangiaks, in his intereſt, and, to heighten their zeal, promiſed them the beſt go-

(c) Meſſengers of the Grand Seignor; who, authoriſed by a firman, go to behead diſgraced grandees.

vernments.

vernments. Sheik Daher alſo wrote to his friends at Grand Cairo, preſſing them to haſten the recal of Ali Bey; and Rahiph, become Vizir, openly eſpouſed his cauſe, and employed the credit he poſſeſſed to effect his re-eſtabliſhment. Theſe various means ſucceeded to the wiſh of Ali Bey. The Sangiaks invited him to return to Grand Cairo, reſume his dignity, and, immediately departing, he was received amid the acclamations of the people.

Thus re-eſtabliſhed, he was perfectly ſenſible of his precarious ſituation; knew he could not depend on tranquillity, and that hatred ſlumbered, but was not extinct. The thunder rumbled over his head, and thoſe who had become diſaffected after the murder of Ibrahim the Circaſſian, were inceſſantly ſpreading ſnares for him, which required all his penetration to avoid. A favourable occaſion, only, was wanting for them to maniſeſt their reſentment, which the death of Rahiph, in 1765, ſupplied. The maſk then dropped off, and they declared open war. In danger of ſinking before his enemies, he fled into Arabia Felix, viſited the coaſts of the Red Sea, examined the ſtate of the country,

try, and again took refuge with Sheik Daher, who received him with all his former affection. The Sheik, taught wiſdom by the experience of eighty years, and a variety of fortunes, was very capable of giving conſolation to the wretched. His diſcourſe relieved the cares of his gueſt, encouraged him to hope for happineſs, and to forget preſent pains. Mean time, the Sangiaks, of the faction of Ibrahim the Circaſſian, ſuppoſing their enemy utterly incapable of moleſting them farther, abandoned themſelves to every ſpecies of oppreſſion, and perſecution, towards the friends of Ali Bey; which imprudence did but increaſe their number, and, perceiving they had been the tools of certain ambitious Sangiaks, they reſolved to ſtrengthen themſelves, by recalling their friend, the former Sheik El Balad, whom they engaged to ſupport with all their power.

Ali Bey departed, having firſt received the affectionate embraces of Sheik Daher, who ardently prayed for his proſperity, and, in 1766, returned to Grand Cairo; where, conſulting with his partizans, he repreſented to them that his former moderation had but excited the vengeance of the friends of Ibrahim,

him, from whoſe conſpiracies flight only had ſaved him, and that their common ſecurity required the ſacrifice of the moſt turbulent. The reſolution was unanimouſly applauded, and, on the morrow, four of the proſcribed were beheaded. This execution reſtored tranquillity to Ali; who, ſecure in his government, in ſix years, made ſixteen of his Mamluks Beys, and one of them Aga of the Janiſſaries. The principal of theſe were Mahamed Abou Dahab, Iſmael, Mourad, Haſſan, Tentaoui, and Ibrahim. The firſt was his countryman, whom he had bought in 1758, and for whom he had a particular affection. Become chief of the republic, he took meaſures to render his power laſting. Not ſatisfied with encreaſing his Mamluks to the number of ſix thouſand, he alſo maintained ten thouſand Mograbi *(d)*. His diſcipline was ſevere, and, by continually exerciſing his troops, he formed excellent ſoldiers: he attached the youth of his houſhold to himſelf by the parental care he took of their education, and, particular-

(d) Mograbi ſignifies weſtern, which general name the Egyptians give to the people of the coaſt of Barbary.

ly, by kind behaviour, and conferring favors on the moſt worthy; ſo that his party became ſo powerful that thoſe of his colleagues, who were not his friends, feared him, and durſt not oppoſe his deſigns. Imagining his authority well eſtabliſhed, he directed his cares to the publick good. The Arabs, diſperſed over the deſerts, and on the frontiers of Egypt, committed ravages which an unſettled government could not repreſs. Againſt theſe Ali ſent bodies of cavalry, that every where vanquiſhed and drove them back to their former ſolitudes. Egypt now began to proſper, and encouraged agriculture flouriſhed. The chiefs of each village were made reſponſible for the crimes of the whole, and puniſhed till ſuch time as the delinquent was rendered up to juſtice; by which means the principal inhabitants watched over the public ſecurity; and, for the firſt time ſince the Turks had governed, the merchant and the traveller might proceed over the whole country, without fear of inſult. Knowing how prone mercenary ſoldiers are to exceſs, both in the capital and the provinces, he ordered the injured to direct their complaints immediately to himſelf,

ſelf, and never failed to render them juſtice. Among the numerous inſtances which are related of his impartial equity, I ſhall mention only one. A Bey, meeting a Venetian merchant, near Old Cairo, made him alight, and forcibly took his ſhawl; Ali, being informed of this, ſummoned the culprit, ſeverely reprimanded him in preſence of the Venetian, obliged him to aſk public pardon, and was near ſtriking off his head. The ſame integrity obſerved in every part of his adminiſtration reſtored the golden age to the happy Egyptians, who do not ceaſe, to this day, to bleſs his memory, and ſing his praiſes.

Ali Bey had bought a female ſlave from Red Ruſſia, who was very beautiful: her flaxen hair reached to the ground, her figure was tall and noble, her complexion of the pureſt white, her eyes blue, and her eyebrows black: but theſe were the leaſt of the treaſures nature had beſtowed on the youthful Maria; her mind was ſuperior to her form. Her unhappy fate never could make her condeſcend to gratify the deſires of her maſter; he ſpoke of his power; ſhe ſhewed ſhe was free, though in chains; he wiſhed to dazzle

by

by his ſplendor; but ſhe was inſenſible to pomp and grandeur. Charmed with a haughtineſs ſo congenial to his nature, he became a lover, and offered her his hand, if ſhe would renounce Chriſtianity; but, though not without affection for a man who had treated her according to her deſerts, ſhe ſtill had the fortitude to refuſe. At laſt, he permitted her to retain her religion, provided ſhe would not profeſs it publicly, and obtained her conſent; and, ſo great was his love for her that, while he lived, he never had any other wife. Though at the ſummit of grandeur, Ali forgot not his parents. Having made his peace with the Porte, he confided the eſcort of the Khaſna, which is annually ſent to Conſtantinople, to Tentaoui, and charged him to go into Natolia, and bring back his father and family. Hearing of their arrival at Boulac, he went to meet them, with a numerous train; and, as ſoon as he perceived the aged Daoud, he deſcended from his horſe, ran, and fell on his knees, and kiſſed his feet. The father wept with joy; it was the happieſt day of his life, and Ali embraced his ſiſter and nephew. This tender

ſcene

ſcéne over, he conducted them to his palace, in the ſquare of Leſbekia *(e)*, and the Mamluks contended who ſhould waſh the feet of their maſter's father. When they had cloathed him in magnificent robes, he was led into the harem, and received the moſt affectionate careſſes from the wife of Ali. Daoud, mounted on a fine horſe, was conducted to the hall of the Divan; the Beys, and even the Pacha, complimented and made him preſents. After remaining ſeven months in Egypt, he wiſhed to return to his native country, whither Ali ſent him, on board a veſſel, loaded with riches, but detained his ſiſter and nephew. You perceive, Sir, incidents which have a great reſemblance to the hiſtory of Joſeph are often renewed in Egypt *(f)*.

The Sheik El Balad, deſirous of giving a ſtill farther proof of his friendſhip for Mahamed Abou Dahab, and attaching him by

(*e*) The largeſt ſquare in Cairo, where moſt of the Beys have palaces.

(*f*) And Joſeph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet his father in Goſhen; and preſented himſelf unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. Geneſis XLVI. 29.

indiſſoluble

indiſſoluble ties, gave him his ſiſter in marriage, and the nuptials were celebrated, during three days, by illuminations, horſe races, and banquetting. He was but heaping benefits on a traitor, who ſilently conſpired the ruin of his benefactor. Secretly uniting himſelf to the remains of the houſe of Ibrahim, he aſpired to ſovereign power; corrupted by ambition, and the love of gold *(g)*, he thought no means unjuſt by which he might attain the dignity of Sheik El Balad. The Beys of his faction, knowing his avarice, gave him conſiderable ſums to rid them of Ali; but he, conſcious of his brother's vigilance, the love of his adherents, and the difficulties of the enterprize, fearing for his life if he were diſcovered, kept the gold, and waited a more favorable opportunity; but, in order to ingratiate himſelf, and blind his friend ſtill farther, he diſcovered the conſpiracy. The conſequences exceeded his hopes, and the affection of Ali, for the man to whom he thought he owed his life, became exceſſive. Abou Dahab, however, never loſt ſight of his deteſtable intents, but endeavoured

(*g*) He had been named *Abou Dahab*, father of Gold, on account of his avarice.

to

to ſeduce Tentaoui, and offered him twelve thouſand guineas to aſſaſſinate his patron, when they ſhould play at cheſs. Tentaoui immediately informed Ali of the propoſal, at which, ſo much was he prejudiced in favor of Mahamed, he did but laugh. Failing in this project, he tried another, and wiſhed to force his wife to poiſon a brother ſhe loved in a diſh of coffee. She rejected the propoſal with horror, and ſent a faithful ſlave to conjure Ali to keep on his guard, and to fear Abou Dahab as his moſt dangerous enemy. So many warnings ought to have rendered him ſuſpicious, but his affection was extreme; nor could he credit crimes which his heart diſclaimed: beſide that the benefits he had conferred rendered him confident.

In 1768, the Ruſſians declared war againſt the Turks, and ſent their fleets into the Mediterranean. The Sheik El Balad, according to cuſtom, raiſed twelve thouſand men to aid the Porte, which circumſtance his enemies endeavoured to turn to his deſtruction. They wrote to the Divan that the troops he had aſſembled were to ſerve in the Ruſſian armies, with whom he had entered into an alliance, and the letter was ſigned by ſeveral

of the Beys. The calumny was credited, without examination, and a Capigi-bachi immediately ſent, with four attendants, for the head of Ali. Happily for him, he had a faithful agent in the council, who immediately ſent off two couriers, the one by land, the other by ſea, to advertiſe him of the treachery. They outſtripped the meſſengers of the Grand Seignor, and Ali ſent for Tentaoui, in whom he had great confidence, informed him of the ſecret, ordered him to aſſume the diſguiſe of an Arab, and, with twelve Mamluks, wait the arrival of the meſſengers from Conſtantinople twenty miles from Cairo, ſeize their diſpatches, and put them to death. Tentaoui performed his miſſion: having waited, ſome time, at the appointed place, he ſaw the Capigi-bachi and his attendants approach, ſeized them and their fatal order, murdered them, and buried their bodies in the ſand.

Having the firman in his poſſeſſion, the Sheik El Balad aſſembled the Beys; and, after reading it to them, ſaid "How long ſhall "we be the victims of Ottoman deſpotiſm; "or what faith can we put in the treaties of "the Porte? Not many years ſince ſeveral

" of the Beys were aſſaſſinated, contrary to " all juſtice: ſome of you were preſent, and " bear about with you the marks of that " maſſacre. The marble, we tread on, is " red with the blood of four of your col- " leagues. To-day I am to die, and to- " morrow the man who ſhall ſupply my " place. The hour is come for us to ſhake " off this tyrant's yoke; who, violating our " privileges and laws, diſpenſes with our " lives at his pleaſure. Let us unite our- " ſelves with Ruſſia, and free the republic " from the dominion of a barbarous maſter. " Grant me your aid, and I will be reſpon- " ſible for the liberty of Egypt."

This ſpeech produced every effect Ali could expect: ſixteen Beys, who were of his party, unanimouſly declared for making war on the Grand Seignor; and the remainder, unable to oppoſe, promiſed every aſſiſtance in their power. The Pacha was immediately ordered to quit Egypt in four and twenty hours, and Ali ſent to Sheik Daher to inform him of what had paſſed; promiſing to unite his troops to thoſe of the Sheik, for the conqueſt of Syria.

As ſoon as the Porte heard of the rebellion of the Beys, and the ſtorm that threatened Syria, the Pacha of Damaſcus was ordered to attack Sheik Daher, before the latter had been joined by the forces of Egypt; who accordingly marched, with twenty thouſand men haſtily aſſembled, to ſurprize St. John d'Acre. The Sheik had all his life been accuſtomed to war with the Turks, and was not alarmed at their approach: he mounted his horſe, called his ſeven ſons, who all commanded fortified caſtles, and immediately marched at the head of nine thouſand cavalry. While one of his ſons harraſſed the enemy with a body of light horſe, Sheik Daher took poſt near the lake of Tiberias. Informed of all their motions, when he knew the Turks would ſoon arrive, he ſeparated his troops into three diviſions; the two firſt were ordered to hide themſelves among the mountains, till the ſignal ſhould be given; he himſelf retired to ſome diſtance, deſerting his camp on the plain, full of proviſions. When night approached, the Pacha, imagining he ſhould ſurprize the Arabs, advanced, ſilently, concealed by darkneſs, and the few troops,

troops, left in the camp, haſtily fled, after a light ſkirmiſh, on his arrival. Their flight was attributed to their fears, and the ſoldiers, heated by a forced march, regarded the abandoned proviſions as lawful conqueſt, and eagerly drank the wine. At break of day, the ſignal was given, and the three bodies of cavalry ſuddenly attacked the camp, ſword in hand, where, finding none but drunken men, their only trouble was to ſlaughter them. Eight thouſand were ſlain, a great number made priſoners, and the flying Pacha, who took refuge in Damaſcus, loſt his tents, arms, and baggage. A courier was diſpatched to Grand Cairo, with the news of his overthrow, by Sheik Daher, who returned into his principality.

His ally thus in ſafety, Ali turned his arms elſewhere. Traverſing Yemen, and the eaſtern coaſt of the Red Sea, he had perceived how many advantages might be gained by commerce, and the productions of thoſe countries, could he ſubdue them; he therefore raiſed two armies, both of cavalry, the firſt containing twenty-ſix, and the other nine thouſand men. The command of the great army was given to his brother-in-law,

and of the ſecond to Iſmael Bey, who was to attack the maritime towns, and ſea ports, while Abou Dahab entered Arabia Felix, and the interior provinces. The plan they were to follow was delivered to the generals, and he equipped a fleet, to coaſt along the Red Sea, and bring them proviſions. Like an able warrior, he had calculated what the obſtacles were they had to ſurmount, and ſucceſs depended on the fidelity with which his orders ſhould be executed. The troops left Grand Cairo in 1770; and, while they marched to conquer Arabia, the Sheik El Balad remained in the capital, where he employed himſelf in the interior government of the kingdom, and the people's happineſs.

The cuſtom duties, in Egypt, had long been in the hands of Jews, who committed flagrant depredations, and impoſed on foreign merchants with impunity. Ali, therefore, intruſted them to the adminiſtration of the Chriſtians of Syria, expreſsly recommending them to favour the Europeans: well convinced how flouriſhing Egypt might become by commerce, his project was to lay the trade open to the whole world, and render this country the emporium of the merchants

of

of Europe, India, and Africa. To effect this, it was neceſſary to defend caravans by his forces, and merchants by the laws; which he did by repelling the wandering Arabs on all ſides, and eſtabliſhing Selim Aga, and Soliman Kiaya, of the Janiſſaries, at Grand Cairo, to protect the merchants, and ſee they had juſtice done them. In like manner, he commanded his generals to leave officers in the ſea ports they took; who ſhould welcome the ſhips of India, and guard them againſt the cupidity of the inhabitants. He ſoon enjoyed the wiſdom of his adminiſtration, ſoon had the happineſs to ſee the Egyptians relieved, foreigners well treated, public ſafety eſtabliſhed, agriculture encouraged, and the republic raiſed to a point of ſplendor which it had never known.

While occupied by theſe cares, his generals triumphed in Arabia. Abou Dahab, in one campaign, conquered Yemen, and dethroned the Schereif of Mecca, inſtituting Emir Abdallah in his place; who, to ingratiate himſelf with Ali, gave him the pompous title of Sultan of Egypt and the two ſeas. Iſmael, on his part, took all the towns on the eaſtern coaſt of the Arabian gulph. They returned

to Cairo, loaded with laurels; where they were received with the loudeſt acclamations, and their victories celebrated by great rejoicings.

Ali forgot not the expedition into Syria, but ſent Abou Dahab thither, in 1771, with forty thouſand men, to attempt its conqueſt. While the army traverſed the deſert, veſſels from Damietta conveyed ſuch proviſions as were needful for its ſupport to St. John d'Acre. Profiting, like a ſkilful politician, by preſent circumſtances, he wrote to Count Orlow, then at Leghorn, to form a treaty of alliance with the Empreſs of Ruſſia, offering the admiral money, proviſions, and ſoldiers: he aſked gunners and engineers in return, promiſing to join his forces with thoſe of Ruſſia, to the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire. The Count thanked Ali, encouraged him in the glorious enterprize, made him great promiſes, which he never performed, and aſſured him he would ſend his diſpatches to his ſovereign.

The year before, he had deputed a Venetian merchant, named Roſetti, to offer the republic of Venice his alliance, and encourage her to retake the iſlands, and fine provinces,

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ſhe had formerly poſſeſſed, in the Mediterranean, from the Turks; promiſing to aid her with all the forces of Egypt, and re-eſtabliſh her ancient commerce; which daring attempt the republic thought proper to decline.

During theſe negociations, Abou Dahab, aided by the council and arms of the prince of Acre, took the cities of Syria from the Ottomans, and drove them before him like ſheep. On the ninth of march he came to the walls of Gaza, ſtrongly garriſoned; which, three days after, he carried by aſſault. Rama coſt him more time and trouble; the beſieged defended themſelves ſo intrepidly that he could not take it by ſtorm; it capitulated after a month's blockade, and the governor fled, fearing the fate that awaited him. The Turks durſt not be ſeen in the field, but ſheltered themſelves behind their walls; and the victor, after theſe two conqueſts, laid ſiege to Naplouſe, formerly Neapolis. The obſtinacy of the beſieged, and the ignorance of the Egyptians in the art of gunnery, made this a work of time. They long attacked the walls, without great ſucceſs, and Abou Dahab, deſpairing of ſtorming it,

it, contracted his lines, and took it by famine. His arms were next turned againſt Jeruſalem, which the Mahometans, as well as Chriſtians, call the Holy City, and hold in great veneration; pretending that Mahomet was miraculouſly tranſported thither, where he prayed with the company of the prophets *(b)*. The governor and high prieſt, ſummoned to ſurrender, ſent a deputation, with preſents, conjuring him to turn the tempeſt from the walls of Jeruſalem, reſpect the place in which the prophet had prayed, and aſſured him, that, if he reduced Damaſcus, they would follow the example of the capital, and open their gates. The Egyptian general acquieſced in their prayer, and led his troops to Jaffa, the antient Joppa. This town is built on a rock that projects into the ſea, and its advantageous ſituation, and fortifications, made the ſiege long, and bloody. Abou Dahab two months battered the walls with his whole artillery; but, as this was neither conſiderable, nor under the direction

(*b*) Praiſe be to God, who, in the night, carried his ſervant from the temple of Mecca to the temple of Jeruſalem; the walls of which we have bleſſed, that marks of our power might there remain. Koran, chap. 17.

of

of good engineers, he made no great breaches. The Egyptians repeatedly returned to the aſſault, and the brave Mamluks mounted the ramparts, but were repelled with loſs. However, the beſieged having periſhed in part, the remainder, fearing to be put to the ſword, if the place were taken by ſtorm, capitulated. Leaving a garriſon here, the general returned to St. John d'Acre, in the beginning of September, where the Arab prince received him joyfully, congratulated and ſupplied him with proviſions and ammunition.

Mahamed, having given his troops a fortnight's reſt, attacked Seide, the ancient Sidon, near which the city of Tyre, famous for its commerce, arts, and ſhipping, formerly flouriſhed. The iſland where it ſtood is now part of the main land, and preſents nothing but ruins. Seide yielded at the firſt ſummons, and Abou Dahab, now maſter of the moſt important places in Syria, led his army before its capital. Damaſcus, ſituated in a rich plain, is ſurrounded by rivulets, and gardens full of orange, piſtachio, pomegranate, and a multitude of other trees, the fruits of which are delicious. Excellent paſte is made from them, which is uſed in the

the compoſition of ſherbet, and ſold all over the eaſt. Nothing can be more pleaſant, more charming, more beautiful, than the environs of this city. Bowers and brooks are every where ſeen; and delightful pavillions, where Turkiſh indolence ſlumbers, on cuſhions of velvet and ſattin. The Arabs call it *Eſſhams*, the city of the ſun. The waters are admirable for tempering ſteel; and the poniards, ſabres, and arms they fabricate, are every where famous. The Pacha had ſhut himſelf up with a numerous garriſon, and courageouſly defended the place for two months; but, at the end of November, ſeeing his walls beat down, his advanced forts deſtroyed, and the enemy ready to ſtorm, he fled, during the night, and the city yielded. The garriſon had retired into the citadel; which, after a ſecond ſiege, and many efforts, the Egyptians at laſt took.

Aleppo was the only conſiderable place the Turks poſſeſſed, and the taking this city would have given the republic of Egypt poſſeſſion of Syria; but Abou Dahab feared this conqueſt would but retard his deſigns. The ruin of Ali, his patron, brother, and friend, he long had meditated; and the deſire of gaining

gaining the ſoldiers, and making them the companions of his ſucceſs, had armed and guided him in his victories. Neither the intereſt of Egypt nor its union with Syria, which would have rendered it independent of the Porte, were any part of his project. When he was ſure of his officers and ſoldiers, and had made them take an oath of fidelity, he reared the ſtandard of rebellion, withdrew the garriſons from the ſubjected towns, and, rendering thus a year of battles and effuſion of blood fruitleſs, returned to Egypt. No ſooner was he gone than the Turks eaſily retook the towns they had loſt, repaired the walls, and added new fortifications. Inflated as he was with ſucceſs, Abou Dahab durſt not directly attempt the capital, where his rival was ſo powerful, but coaſted the weſtern borders of the Red Sea, croſſed the deſert, and entered Upper Egypt. His guilty purpoſe thus manifeſted, he ſeized on Girga, and the moſt important towns; gained, by force or addreſs, the Beys who governed them, and deſcended toward Grand Cairo.

Ali Bey too late repented having followed rather the emotions of his heart than the counſels

counſels of prudence, by giving an enemy ſo perfidious a command with which he ought never to have been entruſted. He ſtill, however, had reſources, which he immediately employed; and, aſſembling twenty thouſand men, made Iſmael Bey their general, on whoſe experience and fidelity he had reaſon to depend. Abou Dahab was encamped near Giſa, and Ali ordered his general to take poſt at Old Cairo, and prevent the enemy from croſſing the river. Nothing was more eaſy; but the perfidious Iſmael, baſely betraying his patron's intereſt, allied himſelf with, and went over to, Abou Dahab. The junction of the two armies was a thunderſtroke to the generous Ali, who, in the firſt moments of deſpair, reſolved to ſhut himſelf up in the caſtle of Grand Cairo, with a few brave friends who remained, and bury himſelf under its ruins. The ſons of Sheik Daher, who loved him, ſhewed the folly of ſuch a reſolution, and conjured him to fly, with them, to St. John d'Acre. He felt the wiſdom of the advice, and profited by it. He wrote immediately to Count Orlow, praying him to ſend ammunition and officers into Syria, and entruſted theſe diſpatches to Jacob

Jacob the Armenian, who had already acquitted himſelf of a ſimilar commiſſion. Ali then collected his treaſure, with which he loaded twenty camels, and ſent to demand of Mallem Reiſk, whom he had made receiver of the revenues, the money in his poſſeſſion; but the knave had hid himſelf, and to find him was impoſſible. Ali Bey, a third time, fled from Grand Cairo, in the middle of the night, acroſs the deſerts; accompanied by the ſons of Sheik Daher, Tentaoui, Roſſuan, Haſſan, Kalil, Mourad, Abderrohman, Latif, Muſtapha, Ibrahim, Zulficar, Haſheph, Oſman, Selim Aga, and Soliman Kiaya, of the janiſſaries, all Beys of his creation, and about ſeven thouſand ſoldiers. He took with him three millions and a half of money, in gold and ſilver; and, after a forced march of five days, arrived, the 16th of April, 1772, before the gates of Gaza, where his troops began to take breath. The treaſon of two men, on whom he had ſo many claims, preyed upon his heart: he ſhuddered at the very name of Abou Dahab, and his blood boiled in his veins. This agitation, and the fatigue of a march ſo painful, occaſioned him to fall dangerouſly

dangerouſly ill; when, yielding to the moſt gloomy melancholy, he expected conſolation in death. Egypt freed, Arabia ſubjected, juſtice eſtabliſhed in the cities, commerce flouriſhing, the good he had done the people, and the good he ſtill deſired to do them, all vaniſhed in a moment, and the recollection was the worſt of his woes. While his heart was thus torn, by griefs ſo piercing, the reſpectable ſire, Sheik Daher, his faithful friend, his conſtant protector in adverſity, came to viſit him in his tent, mingled his tears with thoſe of Ali, called him his ſon, and endeavoured, by diſcourſe equally wiſe and affectionate, to relieve his pangs. He told him he ought not yet to deſpair; the Ruſſian ſquadron approached, and, with this aſſiſtance, he might remount the throne whence treaſon had caſt him down. Powerful is the voice of friendſhip over the affectionate heart. It is a ſalutary balm that glides and pervades the faculties, and cures, as by inchantment, the wounds of mind and body: Ali felt its divine effects, and hope once more relumined the torch of life. The Arab prince had his phyſician with him,

whom

whom he left with the patient, and who, in ſome weeks, recovered his health.

A detachment from the Ruſſian ſquadron having appeared before St. John d'Acre, Ali profited by the occaſion to write to Count Orlow; repeating his former propoſals, aſking cannon, gunners, and a body of three thouſand Albanians, aſſuring him that, when re-eſtabliſhed at Grand Cairo, the whole force of Egypt ſhould be at his command. He likewiſe addreſſed a letter to the Czarina, ſolliciting her alliance, and propoſing a treaty of commerce with Egypt. Zulficar Bey bore theſe diſpatches, and with them a preſent of three fine horſes, richly accoutered, to the Ruſſian Admiral. Certain it is, had Ruſſia ſent this ſmall ſuccour to the Sheik El Balad, he would have triumphed over his enemies, and been proclaimed King of Egypt; nor can it be doubted that gratitude would have induced him to have put the commerce of the eaſt into the hands of the Ruſſians, and would have ceded to them the ports on the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean. The face of theſe countries would have been changed. The Ruſſian ſhips ſailed for Paros

the 18th of May, 1772, taking the ambaſſador of Ali on board.

The haſty retreat of Abou Dahab had given the Turks time to return, and fortify themſelves in their towns; from which Ali again attempted to drive them. Having collected a body of ſix thouſand men, he gave the command to the brave Tentaoui, with an order to attack Seide. Sheik Lebi, and Sheik Crim, the one the ſon, the other ſon-in-law, of the prince of Acre, joined the Bey, and they marched together. Haſſan *Pacha*, in an advantageous poſt, waited for them, at the head of thirteen thouſand men; but, notwithſtanding their inferiority, they did not heſitate to give him battle. Their cavalry was excellent; they fell impetuouſly upon the Turks, whom they broke, killed a great number, and put the reſt to flight. The fugitives ſpread the alarm in Seide, which immediately opened its gates to the victors. Tentaoui, leaving a garriſon in the town, under the command of Haſſan *Bey*, returned to the camp, where he received the compliments of Ali, and the prince of Acre.

The

The 13th of Auguſt, in the ſame year, Ali marched againſt Jaffa, acompanied by the valiant ſons of Sheik Daher, who had equipped two veſſels to carry ſtores and proviſions for the beſiegers. The governor was ſummoned to ſurrender, and, on his refuſal, the town beſieged. The walls were battered for forty days; but Ali's feeble artillery made very inconſiderable breaches: the ſignal of aſſault was nevertheleſs given, and the ſoldiers advanced with intrepidity; but the difficulty of ſcaling the walls, and the valour of the beſieged, forced them to retreat. Finding he could not carry it by ſtorm, he reſolved to take it by famine; and, during the blockade, ſent Tentaoui, with a detachment of cavalry, to take Gaza by ſurpriſe. The brave chief flew to the place, took it at the firſt onſet, left a garriſon, and returned to the camp, crowned with laurel. The people of Jaffa received ſuccour by ſea, and reſolutely defended themſelves. The only thing they were in abſolute want of was wood. The country round is delightful, and ſcattered over with gardens, where the orange and citron extend their charming ſhades, watered by abundant ſprings, which

deſcend from the mountain, and make their verdure eternal. Theſe trees are loaded with fruit, during one part of the year, and Ali had ſpared them; but, perceiving the beſieged cut them down, and carried them off, under favor of the darkneſs, he had them felled immediately, and deſtroyed thoſe pleaſant plantations.

Mean time Ali's ambaſſador, Jacob, returned from his miſſion on board an Engliſh veſſel, commanded by Capt. Brown. Count Orlow ſent him two Ruſſian officers, and diſpatches aſſuring him of his friendſhip, and promiſing powerful aſſiſtance. Theſe officers preſented Ali, on the part of the Admiral, three pieces of cannon, that would carry four-pound balls, ſeven barrels of powder, and five hundred bullets; and here ended the magnificent promiſes of Count Orlow.

The ſiege continued, and Clinglinoff, the Ruſſian captain, raiſed a new battery of three pieces, carrying twelve-pound balls, with which he greatly annoyed the city. Having beat down a part of the wall, and wiſhing to ſee the effect of the artillery, he was killed by a muſquet ball, as he was looking through

through an embraſure. This brave officer had, a little before, embarked with a ſingle man, during night, to burn the Turkiſh veſſels, which anchored in the harbour; being diſcovered, before he could execute his deſign, the fire from the ramparts obliged him precipitately to retire.

Captain Brown added ſix more cannon to thoſe which already played upon the city, and practicable breaches were made. Ali ſounded the charge, and his troops mounted to the aſſault; but ardent as they were, the numerous and valiant garriſon, which continually received reinforcements by ſea, obliged them to retreat. Several Ruſſian ſhips approached Jaffa, at the requeſt of Ali, and, bombarding it for two days, beat down a part of the houſes: but, fearing a lee-ſhore, if the weſt winds ſhould blow with violence, they left this dangerous road. Theſe multiplied attacks reduced the beſieged to great extremities. Their city was laid in ruins; the terrified governor fled, in the night; and, eſcaping the vengeance of his enemies, got to Naplous, where his brother commanded. On the morrow, the 31ſt of January, Ali entered the city. This ſanguinary

guinary ſiege coſt him three Beys and an infinite number of Mamluks. He gave the place up to Sheik Daher, who had ſupplied his army with proviſions and ſtores.

While he lay before Jaffa, Mallem Reiſk, the receiver-general of Egypt, came to his tent, diſguiſed like a derviſe: his ſun-burnt face, meagre looks, and dirty and ragged dreſs, diſguiſed him effectually. His ſtory was that, as ſoon as he learned the ſucceſs of Abou Dahab, fearing the avarice of the traitor, he hid his money, and fled to the deſerts; where, for a whole year, he had lived a miſerable life. Ali ſaw him unfortunate, pitied him, forgot his perfidy, and gave him cloaths and money. The camp was a witneſs, at the ſame time, of another example of the viciſſitude of human affairs. Emir Abdallah, who, by order of Ali, had been raiſed to the principality of Mecca, the office of Scheriff, came to implore his aid. His rival was re-eſtabliſhed, and he conſtrained to fly. Ali conſoled and loaded him with preſents, and he returned to Medina. Thus, the fall of the chief of Egypt entails misfortune on all who are attached to his party.

The

The Sheik El Balad next led his troops to Rama, which was carried ſword in hand; and this ſucceſs raiſed the hopes of his partizans, and made them confident they ſhould re-enter Grand Cairo triumphant. Ali had conſtantly kept up a correſpondence with the chiefs of the Janiſſaries, whoſe power in the capital is great; and his promiſes, and the averſion the avarice of Abou Dahab inſpired, determined them openly to eſpouſe his cauſe, and demand his recal. They wrote him word he might return, and they would defend his intereſts. This news gave him great joy; he communicated it to his friends, and prepared for Egypt. Sheik Daher was of a contrary opinion, and adviſed him to wait the promiſed aid of Ruſſia, foment diſſenſion among the Beys, make himſelf more certain of the temper of the troops, and neither lightly hazard his fortune nor his life. Theſe prudent counſels were not followed: Ali, impatient to return to Grand Cairo, and humble his foes, thought himſelf marching to victory. Collecting the garriſons of the conquered towns, and raiſing contributions, he arrived at Gaza the 21ſt of March, and left it the 4th of April, 1773.

His whole cavalry conſiſted of two thouſand men, and two hundred and fifty Mamluks. Three thouſand four hundred Mograbi compoſed his infantry. Tentaoui, Kalil, Latif, Haſſan, Abderrohman, Mourad, Selim Aga, and Soliman Kiaya, of the janiſſaries, were the only remaining Beys. Six hundred and ſixty horſe, commanded by the ſon and ſon-in-law of Sheik Daher, joined this ſmall army; the amount of which was ſix thouſand three hundred men.

Abou Dahab had ſent twelve thouſand men to Salakia, a town on the iſthmus of Suez, to impede Ali's march; which troops immediately advanced, at his approach, in order of battle. The Sheik El Balad ſtaid not to heſitate, but fell like lightning upon them, fighting, ſabre in hand, at the head of the Mamluks, who, encouraged by his preſence, carried death throughout the ranks. The enemy ſtood this terrible ſhock four hours; at laſt, being every where broken, they fled to the deſerts, leaving a great number dead on the field. This glorious victory animated the ſmall army of Ali, who, led by ſo brave a chief, thought themſelves invincible. Profiting by their ardour, he marched

marched directly for Grand Cairo, where the fugitives ſpread the news of their defeat, and his approach. Abou Dahab aſſembled the Beys of his faction, and the heads of the people, to whom he thus ſpake.

" Valiant chiefs of the Republic, and you Egyptians, who cheriſh the law of our prophet, you are acquainted with Ali. He is a Chriſtian in his heart, has allied himſelf to infidels, and wiſhes to conquer that he may extirpate the religion of Mahomet, and force you to embrace Chriſtianity. Recollect what the Europeans have done in India. The muſſulmen of thoſe rich countries welcomed them kindly, received them in their ports, granted them counting houſes, and formed treaties of trade with them. What was the conſequence? Chriſtians have ravaged their provinces, deſtroyed their cities, conquered their kingdoms, and, after reducing them to ſlavery, have eſtabliſhed idolatry on the ruins of the true religion *(i)*. A ſimilar fate attends you, faithful muſſulmen. Allied with Europeans, Ali will overthrow your government, lay Egypt open to infidels, and force

(*i*) The Mahometans call us idolaters, becauſe, unable to comprehend our myſteries, they ſay we worſhip ſeveral Gods.

you

you to become Chriſtians. Aſſiſt me to repel the enemy of the republic, of the laws, of Iſlamiſm, or expect all the evils which your brethren of Bengal have endured: chuſe between him and me."

So ending, Abou Dahab pretended to retire and abdicate the dignity of Sheik El Balad; but the audience univerſally denounced curſes on the head of Ali, and promiſed to ſhed their laſt drop of blood in the common cauſe. Abou Dahab, profiting by the enthuſiaſm of the moment, proclaimed, throughout the city, that whoever loved his religion and country muſt take arms; and, before night, twenty thouſand men enliſted under his banner; at the head of which army he immediately departed, to attack his enemy. The janiſſaries, faithful to their promiſe, refuſed to follow, and tranquilly waited the ſucceſs of the battle.

This was an unexpected event to Ali, who, informed that Abou Dahab was advancing with an army thrice as numerous as his own, abandoned himſelf to deſpair, and fell dangerouſly ill. He was adviſed to return to St. John d'Acre, but he declared he would die rather than retreat a ſtep.

The

The 13th of April, 1773, the army from Grand Cairo came in ſight of his camp, and he arranged his troops in order of battle. Sheik Lebi and Sheik Crim commanded the left wing, Tentaoui the right, and his infantry occupied the centre. Theſe prudent diſpoſitions made, he exhorted his chiefs to fight valiantly, and ordered himſelf to be carried into his tent, for he was ſo weak he could not ſit on horſeback. The battle began about eleven in the morning; both charged with fury, and, notwithſtanding the inferiority of Ali's forces, they, at firſt, had the advantage. Sheik Lebi and Sheik Crim glorioufly repulſed the Egyptian cavalry; and Tentaoui and his brave Mamluks overthrew all before them. Victory had declared for Ali when the Mograbi, mercenary troops, who always fight for the luſt of gain, corrupted by the magnificent promiſes of Abou Dahab, went over to his ſide, and the face of fortune was changed. The flying rallied, and, having only three thouſand men to encounter, ſurrounded them on all ſides, and made great ſlaughter. The generous Tentaoui could not ſurvive the defeat. He pierced the thickeſt ſquadrons, and fell, covered

vered with wounds, on a heap of dead himſelf had immolated. Sheik Lebi, the valorous ſon of the Prince of Acre, long defended himſelf, with his Arabs, and fell combating. Sheik Crim, cutting a paſſage through the Egyptians, galloped, full ſpeed, to the tent of Ali, and conjured him to fly to St. John d'Acre. Mourad, Ibrahim, Soliman, and Abderroman, arrived alſo, and made the like remonſtrances. Ali anſwered, fly my friends: I command you: as for me, my hour is come. Scarcely had they quitted him before he was ſurrounded by the victorious troops. The Mamluks, who guarded his tent, defended their maſter to their laſt drop of blood, and all periſhed with their arms in their hands. Deſpair gave ſtrength to the unfortunate Sheik El Balad; he roſe, and killed the two firſt ſoldiers who attempted to ſeize him: they then fired, and he was wounded with two balls. The Lieutenant of Abou Dahab entering, ſabre in hand, Ali, firing his piſtol, ended him. Bathed in his blood, he fought like a lion; but, a ſoldier behind bringing him down with his ſabre, they fell upon him, and carried him to the tent of the victor. The traitor, perfidious to the laſt, ſhed

feigned

feigned tears, at beholding him thus, and endeavoured to yield him conſolation. Ali turned away his eyes, and ſpake not a word. He died, a week after, of his wounds; though ſome have informed me they were not mortal, but that he was poiſoned by his infamous brother-in-law; if ſo, this was the completion of his atrocious acts; nor can we reflect, without ſhuddering, on the horrors which ambition will impel men to commit.

Ali was above the middle ſize: his eyes were large and full of fire, his manner was noble and winning, and his character frank and generous. Nature had endowed him with unconquerable fortitude, and an elevated genius. Far from that barbarous pride which leads the Turks to contemn foreigners, he loved them for their talents, and liberally rewarded their ſervices. His deſire to obtain officers, to diſcipline his troops, and teach them European tactics, was great; he fell the victim of friendſhip, and his misfortunes were the conſequence of having nurtured a traitor, who profited by his beneſactions to embitter and rob him of life. Had Ruſſia accepted his offers, and granted him engineers, with three or four thouſand men, he would

would have ſubdued Syria and Egypt, and yielded the commerce of Arabia and India into the hands of his ally. He periſhed at the age of forty-five; the Egyptians wept his death, and ſaw themſelves again the victims of miſeries from which he had delivered them.

When Sheik Daher was informed of the death of Ali, and his ſon, he abandoned himſelf to affliction. The unfortunate ſire fell proſtrate on the earth, covered himſelf with duſt, and ſhed torrents of tears. It was ſoon neceſſary to defend his life and his country. Vain of his victory, Abou Dahab wiſhed to revenge the protection the Arabian prince had given Ali, and marched for Syria with the whole force of Egypt, leaving Iſmael governor in his abſence. Jaffa was the firſt place attacked, and courageouſly defended by Sheik Crim, which lengthened the ſiege. Unfortunately, a European, whom the promiſes of Abou Dahab had gained, ſunk a mine, by which a great part of the walls were thrown down; and the Egyptians, entering the breach, put the inhabitants to the ſword. After this barbarity, they marched for St. John d'Acre, which Sheik Daher, who

who loved his people, and dreaded they might find a fate equally cruel, after adviſing them to open their gates to the conqueror, abandoned; flying to the mountains, with his ſons. Abou Dahab, finding no reſiſtance, ſpared the effuſion of blood; but, imagining the monks of Nazareth were entruſted with the treaſures of the prince, he ſent for, and commanded them to deliver them up, immediately. In vain did theſe poor people proteſt they had no knowledge of any treaſure; he beheaded three of them, and, not ſatisfied with this, put Mallem Ibrahim Saba, the receiver of Sheik Daher, to the torture, under which he expired, that he might force a diſcovery of theſe imaginary treaſures. Some of the ſons of the Arab prince underwent a ſimilar fate, with no better ſucceſs.

Here ended the crimes of Abou Dahab; he was one morning found dead in his bed. Some pretend he was poiſoned, by one of his ſlaves; but this is uncertain. When the news was known, the Egyptian troops returned to Grand Cairo, and Iſmael was elected Sheik El Balad. The prince of Acre immediately left the mountains, and again entered his principality, where he was received

ceived by the people with ſhouts, rejoicings, and ſolemn feaſts.

While theſe things were tranſacting, a Turkiſh ſquadron caſt anchor on the coaſt of Syria, and the Capitan Pacha, having obtained the Sheik Daher's permiſſion to viſit him, brought a firman from the Grand Seignor which, pardoning the paſt, confirmed the ſovereignty of Acre on him and his deſcendants. The joy of the aged prince was exceſſive. Now near the grave, he ſaid he ſhould die without regret, having the power which he had purchaſed by ſixty years labours, and wars, made legitimate. The Turkiſh admiral was magnificently treated, and loaded with preſents; and, after teſtifying his thanks, entreated the Sheik Daher, before he went, to come and dine on board the fleet. After the firman he had received, the Arab prince, unſuſpicious of meditated treaſon, accepted his invitation, and, as he came on board, being firſt ſaluted by a diſcharge of the artillery, was, the moment after, ſhewn another firman, which the admiral drew from his boſom, that condemned him to death, and he was beheaded.

ed (k). The reſpectable ſire, thus baſely betrayed, was eighty-ſix years of age, and adored by the people, whom all his life he had defended againſt the tyranny of Pachas. Thus the Divan treats the Grandees of the Empire. But a government obliged to employ ſuch means, to recal princes and governors to their duty, betrays its impotence; and, having no arms to defend its provinces, except perfidy, is on the brink of ruin. When corrupted by effeminacy, flattery, and a ſpirit of bigotry, the Greek Emperors deſtroyed all thoſe at whom they took umbrage with fire and ſword, it was not long before they were dethroned, and Conſtantinople became the habitation of a more generous people. The Ottomans uſe ſimilar means, at preſent, and may expect a ſimilar fate. I believe ſuch

(k) Such was the manner in which Sheik Daher was aſſaſſinated, according to what I heard in Egypt, two years after his death; but the following note, which was communicated to me by the commander of La Bourdonnaie Monluc, may perhaps rectify this miſtake. "The "Captain-Pacha, lying before the walls of St. John d'Acre "with the Turkiſh fleet, cannonaded the town ſome days, "from which Sheik Daher fled among the mountains. "The commander of his cavalry betrayed him, cut off "his head, and brought it to the Ottoman Admiral."

reflexions to be juſt; becauſe, attentively conſulting the annals of hiſtory, we always behold kingdoms decline with the virtue and morals of their inhabitants.

I have the honor to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

SEQUEL OF THE LIFE OF ALI BEY.

The Hiſtory of Iſmael Bey, become Sheik El Balad. Mourad and Ibrahim, Beys in upper Egypt, connect themſelves with the Arabs; and, Iſmael ſending troops againſt them, retire to the deſert, fortify themſelves, ſeize the principal towns of the Said, proceed to Giſa, and make a treaty of alliance with Iſmael. In danger of being maſſacred in Grand Cairo, they fly to Girga, call in the Arabs, and defeat the ſoldiers Iſmael ſends to give them battle. He comes himſelf: they bribe his army, and the Sheik El Balad eſcapes to Syria, with his treaſure. Returned to Cairo, they appoint their own creatures Beys, and lord it over Egypt. Battle with Haſſan Bey, in the ſtreets of Grand Cairo, and its conſequences. Mourad conducts the caravan of Mecca, and beheads the Arabs who demand the uſual tribute. Attacked and wounded, he obliges the enemy to retreat. His quarrels with Ibrahim.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I HOPE, Sir, a narrative of the events which followed the death of Ali Bey, moſt of which I myſelf have ſeen, will afford you amuſement. After the deceaſe of this valiant chief, and that of Abou Dahab, Iſmael tranquilly reaped the fruit of his treaſon, was elected Sheik El Balad, and reigned ſovereign of Egypt. Diſtributing provinces to his creatures, he beheld none but dependants; and, to ſecure dominion, obtained the ſupport of the Pacha, an adroit and enterpriſing man. Having gained him, and the officers of the janiſſaries, he diſpatched his orders throughout Egypt, and his will was law. Educated by Ali, he knew the trade of war, poſſeſſed courage, and a great knowledge of buſineſs. But theſe qualities were tarniſhed by avarice. Gold was gathered from all parts, and, inſtead of exerting himſelf for the people's good and the ſtate's glory, he thought but of increaſing his treaſures. While he ſuppoſed he had nothing to fear, Mourad and Ibrahim were ardently

ardently desirous of revenging the death of their patron. The first was courageous, frank, passionate, and inconsiderate. The second, having more coolness and finesse, was more able in forming of factions. After vowing friendship, they left Syria, with a small number of Mamluks who followed their fortunes, crossed the deserts, and entered the Said, where, before they could obtain partizans, Ismael sent an army against them. Mourad, with a handful of soldiers, wished to give battle; but the more prudent Ibrahim prevented him, and they retired to solitudes whither the enemy durst not follow. Here they attached an independent Arab prince to their interests, by promising to enlarge his estates if, through his assistance, they should re-enter the capital. The Emir, happy to grant protection to exiled Beys against Ismael, who wanted to levy contributions on his territories, swore to aid them with all his power, and, immediately, ordered his Arabs to take arms: six thousand horse joined his standard, with which small army they coasted the river side, seizing the principal towns on its banks, and approached Grand Cairo. After vanquishing various

detachments Iſmael had ſent, they came, in 1777, and encamped near Giſa. The Sheik El Balad left the caſtle, at the head of a numerous army, to prevent their paſſing the Nile. While the armies were in ſight of each other, the generals reciprocally ſent deputies, and ſpoke of accommodation. Iſmael, fearing the impetuous valour of Mourad, and the prudence of Ibrahim, would not riſque his fortune on the fate of a battle, and offered them their rank as members of the republic. Peace, accordingly, was ſigned, and they entered the capital, preceded by the Arab prince, who, on a ſtately horſe, marched at the head of his cavalry, armed with ſabres and lances. After three days ſtay at Grand Cairo, and ſeeing the purpoſe of his coming effected, he returned to his principality, loaded with preſents and promiſes. This reconciliation was not ſincere. Iſmael had invited his enemies that he might deſtroy them without fighting, and, poſſeſſed of wealth and power, thought his deſign might eaſily be accompliſhed. Dangers ſurrounded the new Beys, and great addreſs was neceſſary to eſcape the ſnares laid for them. In 1778, the Sheik El Balad, fearing,

ing, ſhould he attack them in their palaces, where they were on their guard, the people would riſe in defence of the remains of the houſe of Ali, in conjunction with the Pacha and his partizans, determined to maſſacre them, the firſt day they ſhould come to the Divan. They were informed of this plot, and eſcaped, during night, into Upper Egypt, fortified themſelves in Girga, called in the Arabs, and reſolutely waited for the enemy. Iſmael ſent a body of horſe to purſue them, whom the fugitives defeated. He then came himſelf, with thirty thouſand men, and, confident in his ſtrength, ſuppoſed victory certain; but the cunning Ibrahim employed the ſame trick which had been ſo ſerviceable to Abou Dahab. Knowing Iſmael's avarice, and that the pay of his troops was bad, he offered one much more conſiderable, with a promiſe to promote the officers. Nothing more was neceſſary to ſeduce a part of thoſe mercenary troops, who always ſell themſelves to the beſt bidders. Iſmael no ſooner perceived himſelf abandoned than he haſtily fled to Grand Cairo, loaded fifty camels with gold, ſilver, and his moſt precious effects, and, eſcaping acroſs the iſthmus, took

refuge in Syria. Ever ſince, the wretch, juſtly puniſhed for having betrayed his friend and maſter, has dragged a miſerable being through the various provinces of the Ottoman empire. I have been aſſured that, going to Conſtantinople, and depending on the promiſes of the Porte, whoſe authority he had re-eſtabliſhed in Egypt, the Divan, having ſeized his treaſures, gave him up to his miſerable fate.

Iſmael being gone, Ibrahim and Mourad became maſters of the kingdom, entered Grand Cairo in triumph, and were received joyfully by the people. One appointed himſelf Sheik El Balad, and the other Emir Hadge. Their firſt buſineſs was to depoſe the Pacha, who had imprudently been of the contrary faction, and declared them enemies of the Grand Seignior. The emiſſary in black came to his apartment, turned up the carpet, and the Pacha, immediately, retired to Boulac, where he waited for orders from Conſtantinople. The new governor came, and they next proceeded to create their Mamluks Beys; at the nomination of whom, I, by means of my Turkiſh dreſs, was preſent. The Sangiaks ſtood at the bottom

bottom of the council-hall, near the grate of the Pacha, and the people crowded the reſt of the apartment. Having given the Kiaya the names of thoſe they meant to appoint, he read them aloud, cloathed the new Sangiaks with the caftan, preſented them the firman, and proclaimed them Beys. The ceremony ended, they conducted the Sheik El Balad and the Emir Hadge, in pomp, to their palaces. The proceſſion was grand. Ibrahim and Mourad, riding horſes beſpangled with gold and diamonds, ſaluted the people, on their right and left, who, making a lane for them, re-echoed their names with ſhouts, wiſhing them all manner of proſperity. The two chiefs continually ſcattered handfuls of medins, piaſtres, and ſequins, which were as eagerly picked up by the Egyptians. Six hundred Mamluks, magnificently cloathed, and mounted on horſes richly capariſoned, went before them. The Janiſſaries, Aſſabs, and different bodies of troops, followed in good order. This laſted two hours, and more than four hundred thouſand men were ſpectators. I was ſurpriſed a herd ſo numerous ſhould voluntarily ſubmit to ſeven or eight thouſand foreigners, whoſe only employment

ployment is to rob, oppreſs, and cruſh them. But the natives of Egypt, gentle, peaceable, and feeble, appear deſtined for eternal ſlavery; bending for ages under the yoke of deſpotiſm, they ſubmit to every evil without a ſtruggle: were they under a mild government, they would be the happieſt people on earth; for not all the miſeries they endure can tear them from a country which they paſſionately love.

Ibrahim and Mourad, having driven Iſmael from Grand Cairo, reſolved to extinguiſh the embers of his houſe. Haſſan Bey they particularly feared, who, by his generoſity, juſtice, and valour, had gained the favour of all ranks. Unable to deſtroy him by art, they employed open force; and directed a ſix-gun battery againſt his palace, whither he had retired, diſtributing troops in the neighbourhood to attack him on every ſide. Haſſan with his Mamluks courageouſly defended himſelf, and repelled all their aſſaults. The noiſe of artillery ſpread conſternation, war was made in the ſtreets and from the roofs of the houſes, buildings were beat down, the tumult of the combatants every where heard, and the cries of the wretched

who

who were the victims of diſſenſion. Bands of raſcals, profiting by the diſorder, ran through all quarters of the city, forced doors, entered houſes, and put all to fire and ſword. The French merchants were terrified, expecting every inſtant to ſee the gate of their diſtrict forced, their fortunes ruined, and themſelves periſh amid their wives and children. I was an actor in this tragedy, and with ſome young people determined to defend the entrance of the ſtreet to the laſt drop of blood, and, at leaſt, to die fighting. Our alarms were not ill founded; about two hundred banditti, with hatchets and arms of all kinds, came to break down the only gate that defended us, but, as it was very ſtrong, and they expected to find reſiſtance, they took another route, and pillaged the neighbouring houſes. This horrid ſcene laſted two days and two nights, during which the noiſe of cannon and muſquetry, and the ſhrieks of deſpair, never ceaſed. We had time to liſten, for not one of us could ſleep. At laſt, on the third day, we perceived, from the top of our terraces, Haſſan Bey, with two hundred Mamluks, ſabre in hand, forcing a paſſage through his enemies, and

and eſcaping from Grand Cairo. Flying towards Syria, he met a body of three thouſand Arabs in the deſert, of the enemy's party, who cut off his retreat. They tried to force their way through theſe ſquadrons, and fought deſperately. The Mamluks all periſhed by his ſide, and he, covered with blood, defended himſelf for an hour. Being taken, the Arabs brought him back to the capital, and Haſſan, at Boulac, entreated them to ſuffer him to go, for a moment, into the houſe of a Sheik, one of his friends, and take a laſt farewell. They granted his requeſt, and diſpatched a courier to inform Mourad they brought his enemy priſoner, who immediately ſent two hundred ſoldiers to bring him his head. They ſurrounded the houſe, and loudly demanded him; but the Sheik, refuſing, declared he would never violate the laws of hoſpitality, by giving up his friend. They were propoſing to uſe force, when Haſſan ſaid, I will not ſuffer you to expoſe yourſelf to the brutality of theſe madmen; they will murder you, your wife, and children. Let me go. So ſaying he tore himſelf from the arms of the Sheik, mounted the terrace, paſt to another,

and

and perceiving the door of the houſe was guarded only by one ſoldier, deſcended ſoftly, opened it, curbed the arm that was lifted to ſtrike him, pulled the ſoldier off his horſe, forced away his ſabre, and fled full gallop to Grand Cairo. The ſoldiers, ſeeing this, ſtood fixed in amazement, but, coming to themſelves, fired after the fugitive, and purſued him with all ſpeed. Two of them having overtaken him, he cut them down with his ſabre, and continued his courſe. All the ſtreets of Grand Cairo have gates for the public ſecurity; ſeveral of theſe he ſhut, and, carrying the keys with him, ſtopped his enemies. Being come to the palace of Ibrahim, he entered the court of the haram, and covered his face with his ſhawl, that he might not be known. The wife of the Sheik El Balad was his kinſwoman, and he entreated her to intercede in his behalf; ſhe, accordingly, fell on her knees, and begged her couſin's life; and Ibrahim, relenting, took Haſſan under his protection, had his wounds cured, and long reſiſted Mourad, who demanded his death: but ſeeing the Emir Hadge prepared for war if his demand was refuſed, he came to terms with him, and

and conſented the priſoner ſhould be baniſhed to Gedda. Accordingly he was taken to Suez, and delivered to the maſter of a ſmall veſſel, who received orders to tranſport him to his place of exile. Two of his ſlaves, the voluntary companions of his ill fortune, knew the captain had a firman, ſigned by Mourad, which condemned their maſter to death when he ſhould land, and immediately informed him of it. Haſſan feigning ignorance, begged the captain to land him on the coaſt of Egypt, inſtead of taking him to Gedda; but neither his threats nor promiſes could prevail. This refuſed, he ſeized the arms that were on board, in the night, and, aſſiſted by his ſlaves, killed the captain and three ſailors, flung the others overboard, and taking charge of the veſſel, ſteered her to Coſſeir, and from thence to the Said, bearing with him the ſum of ſixteen thouſand pounds, which he found in the veſſel; ſince when he has endeavoured to make partizans, and, perhaps, may hereafter return to Cairo victorious according to the deſires of the people.

The death of ſix Beys of Iſmael's faction, and the flight of the reſt, rendered Ibrahim and Mourad abſolute in Grand Cairo. All obſtacles

obſtacles removed, the Emir Hadge made ready, according to cuſtom, to conduct the caravan of Mecca. Pilgrims aſſembled from all parts, in the plain of Hellai, near the city, where about ten thouſand tents were erected, covering a great extent of ground. Thoſe of the officers and chiefs were of painted cloth lined with ſilk and ſattin, and adorned with cuſhions of embroidered ſtuff in gold and ſilver. Great numbers of ſmall, coloured, glaſs lamps were lit round each tent at night, which produced a brilliant and diverſified illumination; and the reflected light, gilding the foliage of the orange and date trees, diſperſed over the country, had a charming effect. The relations and friends of the pilgrims came to paſs this night with them, and, at break of day, the Emir Hadge gave the ſignal with drums and trumpets. The tents were all ſtruck, camels were loaded with proviſions and baggage, and the march began. The van-guard, eſcorted by a body of horſe, well mounted, went firſt; next followed the camel which carried the carpet deſtined to cover the caaba, or houſe of God; his head adorned with a ſuperb plume of feathers, and his body covered with cloth of gold, while prieſts

ſung

ſung round him the hymns of the Koran. About forty thouſand pilgrims followed on foot, on horſeback, and on camels. Five thouſand cavaliers, in different corps, under the orders of the Emir Hadge, flanked the caravan, and a ſmall number of women, borne in litters, went with them. The departure of this caravan was moſt magnificent. The men, well dreſſed, ſeemed ſtrong and healthy; the horſes ſpirited and fiery. When they return their appearance is changed. The animals mean and languid, and the pilgrims pale, meagre, and ſun-burnt, look like ſkeletons. This is an extremely ſevere journey, which laſts forty days, over deſerts where they ſometimes travel fifty leagues without finding a drop of water fit to drink. The ſun's heat is exceſſive; the duſt, which is raiſed by the feet of this multitude of men and beaſts, obſcures the air, fills the eyes and mouth, and takes away the breath. Sometimes the infectious ſouth winds riſe in whirlwinds ſo dreadful that three or four hundred men periſh in a day; but this is very advantageous to the Emir Hadge, who inherits the baggage and commercial effects of all who die on the road, and often returns to

Grand Cairo with a third of the wealth which firſt departed with the caravan.

The caravan that Mourad headed, having paſſed the far end of the Red Sea, entered the Arabian deſerts, where the Arabs aſſembled, and demanded the uſual tribute; but he beheaded their chiefs, and, wanting force to diſpute the paſſage, they retired to their tents breathing vengeance. The caravan came ſafe to Bedder, where, according to cuſtom, it joined that of Damaſcus, and, ſix days after, arrived at Mecca. Mahometans, aſſembled from all parts of the world, remain a fortnight in this city, performing the duties of religion, and trading to an immenſe amount. Some of the pilgrims go to fulfil the command which ordains every Muſſulman to viſit the houſe of God once in his life; others, attracted by the hope of gain, carry thither the rareſt products of their country; rich ſtuffs, the diamonds of India, the fine pearls of the Perſian gulph, the famous balſam of the orientals, the blades of Damaſcus, Moka coffee, gold duſt from Africa, and ſequins from Grand Cairo, are all found here in abundance, where, above a hundred thouſand traders are aſ-

ſembled; it is the richeſt fair, perhaps, in the world. As the time is ſhort, no calculation can be made of the vaſt amount of the ſale during this fortnight. It were to be wiſhed that ſome European, who underſtands Arabic, diſguiſed like a merchant, could be preſent, and give deſcriptions, inſtead of thoſe we have by word of mouth from people who go thither, and which cannot be received with implicit faith, becauſe the Muſſulmen do not willingly converſe with infidels concerning their religion. Ships loaded with certain merchandizes of Europe and India, which ſhould proceed to Gedda, then would find certain vent for their cargoes, for which they would be immediately paid in money. The Engliſh have made ſome ſucceſsful voyages of this kind; which, no doubt, they would have continued, had not political views and diſputes, between them and the natives, raiſed obſtacles.

Mourad Bey was not ſo fortunate returning as he had been when going. Several Arab tribes united to revenge the death of their chiefs: waiting for the caravan between the mountains, which they ſucceſsfully attacked, and in which diſorder and confuſion

confuſion at firſt reigned. Among the numbers which fell one over the other, as they fled, many were cruſhed, and many killed by the continual fire of the enemy. The Emir Hadge, having formed his troops, endeavoured to repel them, marching at the head of the Mamluks; and, notwithſtanding the artillery of the Arabs, aſcended the mountains, and a bloody battle enſued. The Emir loſt many of his men, and was wounded in the thigh and arm by two bullets, which however did not hinder him from vanquiſhing the Arabs, and obliging them to fly in diſorder. They appeared no more, and he came to Grand Cairo, exhauſted with fatigue and almoſt dying. M. Grace, the French phyſician, was called in, and cured him, but not without ſuffering many fears, for his life depended on that of the patient. The people of Grand Cairo left the city to meet their relations and friends; and, weeping the loſs of brothers, fathers; and, huſbands, filled the air with lamentations. Diſconſolate mothers rent their cloaths and covered their heads with duſt; while others, joyful to meet the perſons they loved, bleſſed Heaven, and were equally loud in their

tranſports. The various ſenſations the ſight inſpired are not to be expreſſed; exceſs of grief and intoxicated joy were alternately ſeen. Each pilgrim, returning to his houſe, found an apartment prepared, according to his condition of life; the walls painted; the furniture, carpets, ſofas, and cuſhions, renewed; as if any thing ancient were unworthy the man who had made this holy pilgrimage. Theſe incidents, Sir, prove the filial affection of the Egyptians, their piety, and the ſublime ideas they have of their religion. Each perſon coming from Mecca ever after aſſumes the ſurname of Hadge *(l)*, which he bears as an honourable title. The wealthy, dreading the fatigue of the journey, imagine they obey the command by ſending a ſubſtitute and paying his expences.

About the end of 1779 I left Egypt, therefore cannot give a circumſtantial account of ſubſequent events; only, by letters from Grand Cairo, I learn that the choleric Mourad, deſirous of being Sheik El Balad, had declared war on his rival; that they had fought, were reconciled; and that, in 1784,

(*l*) Pilgrim.

quarelling

quarelling again, they were each at the head of an army, and ready for battle, the ſucceſs of which I have not heard; but be the victor who he may, he will endeavour to raiſe his creatures, and exterminate the Beys of the oppoſite faction, till treaſon or defeat have brought him to a ſimilar end.

Judge, Sir, of the ſtate of Egypt, thus abandoned to eight thouſand foreign banditti, who devour their rich provinces, and continually ſubject them to the horrors of war; but be your ideas what they may on its miſery, they are below the truth. Agriculture ruined; the canals, which every where ſpread abundance, dry; arbitrary taxes violently raiſed; people of worth plundered and maſſacred; robbers in every office; war, peſtilence, and famine; together with the fatal effects of diſcord among the chiefs: ſuch, Sir, are the woes under which the Egyptians groan.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XII.

ON THE AGRICULTURE OF THE COUNTRY.

Agriculture formerly flouriſhed in Egypt; the great works performed to contain the river, and water the lands, and their decay. Products, ſeed-time, and harveſt, differing according to the ſituation of the grounds. Their former abundance. How this prodigious fertility might be reſtored. The Egyptian management of bees, which they take in boats from one end of the kingdom to the other.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

AGRICULTURE, Sir, was honourable among the antient Egyptians, which they had rendered moſt flouriſhing throughout their empire; witneſs their immenſe labours for diſtributing the waters over the lands. There are ſtill eighty canals, like rivers, ſeveral of which are twenty, thirty, and forty leagues in length, receiving and diſtributing

buting the inundation over the country. Except ſix, the others are almoſt all filled up, and are dry when the Nile is low. The grand lakes of Mœris, Behira, and Marcotis, were vaſt reſervoirs to contain the ſuper-abundant waters, and afterwards diſperſe them among the neighbouring plains. They were raiſed, over the high lands, by means of chain buckets, the invention of which is due to the Egyptians. One ox can turn them, and water a vaſt field. Theſe machines gave Archimedes, during his voyage in Egypt, the idea of his ingenious ſcrew, which is ſtill in uſe. Beſides theſe reſervoirs, all the towns, a little diſtance from the Nile, are ſurrounded by ſpacious ponds for the convenience of the inhabitants and agriculture. The remains we find of large mounds were to contain the river: they alſo ſtopped the torrents of ſand, which inceſſantly tend to cover the face of Egypt. Aqueducts brought the water to the top of mounts, where there were immenſe ciſterns hewed in the rock, and whence they afterwards ran among deſerts, which they transformed into fruitful fields. Near Babain are the ruins of one of theſe aqueducts, running towards Lybia; it

bears the majeſtic ſtamp of the works of the Egyptians, works not leſs miraculous, and more uſeful, than the pyramids and coloſſal figures of the Thebais. They prevented the ravages of high inundations, and ſupplied the defects of the low ones, thus feeding millions of inhabitants.

Twelve hundred years has this country been ſubjected to a people who, not farmers themſelves, have ſuffered theſe great works to periſh, and the ignorance of its preſent government will compleat their deſtruction. The limits of cultivated Egypt yearly decreaſe, and ſterile ſands every where accumulate. When the Turks conquered Egypt, in 1517, the lake Mareotis was near the walls of Alexandria, and the canal through which its waters ran to that city was navigable. This lake has diſappeared, and the lands it watered, which, according to hiſtorians, produced corn, wine, and fruits in abundance, are become deſerts, where the melancholy traveller finds neither tree, ſhrub, nor verdure. The very canal, the work of Alexander, neceſſary for the ſubſiſtence of the city he had built, is almoſt filled up; it is dry, except when the waters are at the higheſt

point

point of inundation, and ſoon becomes ſo again. Forty years ſince, a part of the mud which the waters had left was removed, and the ſtream remained three months longer; were it emptied entirely it would recover its antient utility. The Peluſiac branch, which ran to the eaſtern ſide of the Lake of Tanis, or Menzala, is abſolutely deſtroyed, and with it the beautiful province it fertilized. The famous canal begun by Nechos *(m)*, and finiſhed by Ptolemy Philadelphus, was cut from this branch to Aggeroud *(n)*, the antient Arſinoe, at the extremity of the Red Sea. Fearing that, by opening this communication, this ſea, which they ſuppoſed eleven feet higher than the Mediterranean, would overflow the country, they formed great locks at its mouth. I think the ſuſpicion was ill founded, ſince other canals, running from the Nile to the Red Sea, have not produced this inconvenience. Immortal works like theſe, executed by kings whoſe happineſs and fame were the proſperity of their people, have not withſtood the deſpoil-

(*m*) Strabo and Pliny confirm the fact.

(*n*) The Red Sea has retired two leagues ſince Ptolemy; Aggeroud is now that diſtance from Suez.

ing

ing conqueror, and that tyranny which deſolates till itſelf lies buried under the ruins of kingdoms whoſe foundations it has ſapped. The canal of Amrou, the laſt of the grand labours of Egypt, and which ran from Foſtat to Colzoum, extends only four leagues beyond Cairo, and is loſt in the lake of the pilgrims. Such, Sir, is the preſent ſtate of the country, and we may reſt aſſured that more than one-third of the lands formerly cultivated are become deſerts, frightful to the traveller.

Population has equally ſuffered: Ancient Egypt ſupplied food to eight millions of inhabitants, and to Italy and the neighbouring provinces likewiſe. At preſent the eſtimate is not one half. I do not think, with Herodotus and Pliny, that this kingdom contained twenty thouſand cities in the time of Amaſis; but the aſtoniſhing ruins every where found, and in un-inhabited places, prove they muſt have been thrice as numerous as they are. You have condeſcended to read the account I have given of its preſent government, therefore cannot be aſtoniſhed at the kingdom's decline. Population is in proportion to the means of ſubſiſtence, and with them increaſes, diminiſhes, and dies. Now, while eight thou-

ſand

ſand foreigners rob, at pleaſure, merchants and huſbandmen, the firſt abandon commerce, the ſecond agriculture, and the people ſenſibly become leſs numerous.

The lands all appertain to the chiefs, which they ſell to individuals. When the proprietor dies it deſcends to the ſon, but he is obliged to purchaſe his father's inheritance; nor is he certain of obtaining it; the higheſt bidder, or the man of moſt credit, becomes proprietor. Who will improve lands which he cannot tranſmit to his ſucceſſors? The farmer, wanting only a livelihood, leaves a part of his grounds untilled. Authorized by the treaty of Selim to levy arbitrary taxes, the Cachefs and Sangiaks commit unheard-of oppreſſions. The wretched labourer often wants food, and ſells the inſtruments of huſbandry to pay thoſe impoſitions; while deſpotiſm renders it impoſſible to cultivate the richeſt land in the world.

Evils not leſs fatal reſult from the viciſſitudes of the government. When the Beys make war, the people take part in their quarrels, and mutually deſtroy each other with fire and ſword. I have more than once ſeen villages burning, their inhabitants maſ-

ſacred

ſacred by their neighbours, and the harveſt conſumed by the flames.

Conſiderable ſums are annually deducted by the chiefs from the tribute ſent to Conſtantinople, for the repairing of public buildings and canals, which they are prevented from doing by their continual diſſentions, and their want of money to purchaſe Mamluks, maintain troops, and increaſe their faction. This is a mortal blow to agriculture; the diſtrict, which owed its fertility and riches to a canal, not receiving ſufficient water, becomes barren, and is abandoned. Traverſing deſerts, and arid countries, for a courſe of nine hundred leagues, the Nile waſhes down a prodigious quantity of ſand and mud. I have ſeen channels dug in which, during a year, it had depoſited ſlime three feet deep; imagine, then, how faſt it muſt dam up the uſeful canals, if men do not continually watch for their preſervation. This very fact will explain how immenſe lakes are become dry, and provinces, formerly fertile, ſterile and uninhabited.

What guilt is theirs who thus exhauſt the ſources of fertility! Wherever the beneficent waters of the Nile come, the earth is loaded with

with its treaſures. They plow both in the Delta and the Said, and, the ox having made a ſhallow furrow, the field is hoed, and levelled like a garden. When ſowed it is ſlightly harrowed, and here ends the labour of the huſbandman, till harveſt, which is abundant in the extreme, and never fails but with the inundation. The corn and barley, ripe, are reaped, and laid on the floor, and the farmer, ſeated in a cart, with cutting wheels, and drawn by oxen blind-folded, drives over the ſtraw which it chops. The corn, winnowed, is yellow, large, and of exceeding good quality. The Egyptians eat red, half-baked bread; bad, becauſe, inſtead of wind and water-mills, they uſe a hand-mill, and do not ſufficiently ſift the flour. A French baker made bread as white as ſnow, and excellently taſted, with this ſame wheat. Rice, as I have ſaid, requires a little more care; the field muſt be inundated, well cleared, and watered every day, when it is planted, which is done by the chain buckets. It is cut in five months, and the product is, uſually, eighty buſhels for one. Beſide theſe grains, Egypt produces abundance of doura, or Indian millet, flax, formerly

merly ſo famous, hemp, carthamus, or baſtard ſaffron, and multitudes of exquiſite melons, and vegetables which the people eat, during the heats.

Seed-time differs according to the province, and the height of the ground. Near Syene, wheat and barley are ſown in October, and reaped in January. About Girja, the harveſt month is February, and March round Grand Cairo: ſuch is the general progreſs of the harveſt through the Said. There are many exceptions, according as the lands are high or low, more or leſs diſtant from the river. They ſow and reap all the year in lower Egypt, wherever they can obtain the water of the river. The land is never fallow, and yields three harveſts, annually; there the traveller inceſſantly beholds the charming proſpect of flowers, fruits, and corn, and Spring, Summer and Autumn, at once, preſent their treaſures. Deſcending from the cataracts, at the beginning of January, the wheat is ſeen almoſt ripe; farther on it is in ear; and ſtill farther the fields are green. Lucerne is mowed three times between November and March, and is the only hay of Egypt, ſerving chiefly to fodder the cattle. Horſes, aſſes, mules,

mules, and camels graze the meadows during winter, and they eat chopped ſtraw, barley, and beans, the reſt of the year, which kind of feed gives health, ſtrength, and mettle. The Arabs accuſtom their horſes to great abſtinence, water them only once a day, and feed them with a little barley and milk.

The Egyptians, who ſeldom cultivate the olive, buy their oil in Crete and Syria, but, as the love of illuminations has deſcended to them from their forefathers, they extract oil from various plants: the commoneſt is the produce of the ſeſamum; they call it *ſireg*, lamp-oil. They alſo extract it from the ſeed of the carthamus, from flax, poppies, and lettuce. The oil of the carthamus is eaten by the common people.

I have mentioned, Sir, the Egyptian art of hatching chickens, which is peculiar to themſelves. Their manner of raiſing bees is not leſs extraordinary, and beſpeaks great ingenuity. Upper Egypt, preſerving its verdure only four or five months, the flowers and harveſts being ſeen no longer, the people of the lower Egypt profit by this circumſtance, aſſembling on board large boats the bees of different villages. Each proprietor

confides his hives, with his own mark, to the boatman; who, when loaded, gently proceeds up the river, and ſtops at every place where he finds verdure and flowers. The bees ſwarm from their cells, at break of day, and collect their nectar, returning, ſeveral times, loaded with booty, and, in the evening, re-enter their hives, without ever miſtaking their abode. Thus ſojourning three months on the Nile, the bees, having extracted the perfumes of the orange flowers of the Said, the eſſence of the roſes of Fayoum, the ſweets of the Arabian jaſmin, and of every flower, are brought back to their homes, where they find new riches. Thus do the Egyptians procure delicious honey, and plenty of wax. The proprietors pay the boatmen, on their return, according to the number of the hives which they have taken from one end of Egypt to the other.

I have the honor to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

ON THE CLIMATE OF EGYPT.

Heat exceſſive in the upper, and moderate in the lower, Egypt. The people ſubject to few diſeaſes. Their manner of curing fevers, and preſerving health. Pernicious ſouth wind during a part of winter. Leproſy unknown, and the plague not native, in Egypt. Europeans ſecured from it by ſecluding themſelves.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I HAVE ſpoken of Egypt, and its productions, Sir, but you have reaſon to entertain doubts concerning the ſalubrity of the climate. The Nile's inundation, and ſtagnant waters in various places, may lead you to ſuppoſe the country unhealthy, and its inhabitants ſubject to many diſeaſes: ſome length of experience and information, collected on the ſpot, may diſplay facts that may calm your fears, and fix your opinion.

Egypt, beginning at the torrid, extends nine degrees into the temperate zone, though certainly the heats of the Thebais ſurpaſs what are felt in many countries directly under the equator. Reaumur's thermometer, when the burning breath of the ſouth is felt, ſometimes riſes to thirty-eight degrees above the freezing point, and, often, to thirty-ſix. This phænomenon muſt be attributed to the aridity of the ſandy plains, which ſurround upper Egypt, and the reverberated ſun-beams from the mountains, by which it is wholly incloſed. Were heat the principle of diſeaſes, the Said would not be habitable, but it only ſeems to occaſion a burning fever, to which the inhabitants are ſubject, and which they cure by regimen, drinking much water, and bathing in the river: in other reſpects they are ſtrong and healthy. Old men are numerous, and many ride on horſeback at eighty. The food they eat, in the hot ſeaſon, much contributes to the preſervation of their health; it is chiefly vegetables, pulſe and milk. They bathe frequently, eat little, ſeldom drink fermented liquors, and mix much lemon juice in their food. This abſtinence preſerves vigour to a very advanced age.

Soon

Soon after the inundation, the fields are covered with corn: the waters, exhaled by the ſun during the day, and condenſed by the coolneſs of night, fall in plentiful dews. The north wind, in ſummer, continually blows, and, finding no obſtacle through all Egypt, where the mountains are not high, drives the vapours of the marſhes and lakes towards Abyſſinia, and inceſſantly changes the atmoſphere. Perhaps the balſamic emanations of orange flowers, roſes, the Arabian jaſmine, and odorous plants, contribute to the ſalubrity of the air. The waters of the Nile, alſo, lighter, ſofter, and more agreeable to the taſte than any I know, greatly influence the health of the inhabitants. All antiquity acknowledges their excellence *(a)*, and the people, certainly, drink them with a kind of avidity, without ever being injured

(*a*) Ptolemy Philadelphus marrying his daughter Berenice to Antiochus King of Syria, ſent her water from the Nile, which, alone, ſhe could drink. *Athenæus.*—— The Kings of Perſia ſend for the waters of the Nile and Sal ammoniac. *Dino Hiſtory of Perſia.*

The Egyptians are the only people who preſerve the water of the Nile in ſealed vaſes, and drink it, when it is old, with the ſame pleaſure we do old wine. *Ariſtides Rhetor.*

by the quantity. Being lightly impregnated with nitre, they are only a gentle aperient to thoſe who take them to exceſs. I will not ſay, with many writers, they make the women prolific, and give ſtrength and plumpneſs to the men; the faithful hiſtorian ought to ſtop where the marvellous begins, and relate only what he can warrant.

In Lower Egypt, the neighbourhood of the ſea, the large lakes, and the abundance of the waters, moderate the ſun's heat, and preſerve a delightful temperature. Strabo and Diodorus Siculus, who long lived here, did not think the country unhealthy.

They have praiſed its fruitful ſoil, its grateful productions, its ſtately monuments, and its great population; without mentioning the dreadful maladies of which the moderns have made it the ſeat. Herodotus poſitively ſays, "The Egyptians are the moſt "healthy people on earth, which advantage "they owe to the ſalubrity of the air, and "temperature of the climate, which ſeldom "varies; for moſt of the diſeaſes of men "ought to be attributed to the rapid viciſſi-"tude of the ſeaſons." To ſome moderns, who have never ſeen this fine kingdom, and, eſpecially,

especially; to M. Paw, it was reserved to teach us a contrary doctrine. He pretends that, at present, "this country is become, "by the negligence of the Turks and Arabs, "the cradle of the pestilence; that another "epidemical disease, equally dreadful, ap-"pears here, occasionally, brought to Cairo "by the caravans of Nubia; that the cul-"ture of rice engenders numerous maladies; "that the want of rain and thunder occa-"sions the air of the Thebais to acquire a "violence that ferments the humours of "the human body, &c. *(b)*". These asser-tions have an air of probability which might impose on people who have not lived in Egypt; but M. Paw has ventured opinions in his closet, without the guidance of expe-rience: had he lived here, facts would have demonstrated the contrary.

In vallies, inclosed by high mountains, where the atmosphere is not continually re-newed by a current of air, the culture of rice is unwholesome, and the husbandman, often, pays with his life the rich harvest the earth yields. But not so near Damietta and Rosetta. The plains are nearly on a level

(b) Recherches sur les Egyptiens et les Chinois.

with the ſea; neither hill nor height impede the refreſhing breath of the north, which drives the clouds and exhalations of the flooded fields ſouthward, continually purifies the atmoſphere, and preſerves the health of the people. Whether this, or any other, be the cauſe, of which I am ignorant, certainly, the huſbandmen who cultivate the rice are not more ſubject to diſeaſes than thoſe of the Thebais, who do not. I paſſed the whole year amidſt rice fields, which I every day went to ſee watered, without finding the leaſt inconvenience. An old ſurgeon, a native of Nice, and who, thirty years, had practiſed at Damietta, has repeatedly confirmed what I have advanced on the healthineſs of the country. The greateſt torment of the inhabitants are the gnats and muſquitos, which, riſing by millions out of the marſhes, ſwarm in the air and the houſes. The handkerchief muſt be held in the hand all day. It is the firſt thing a viſitor receives, and, at night, it is neceſſary to ſleep under muſquiteros.

Diſeaſes of the eyes are the commoneſt in Egypt, where the blind are numerous. This affliction ought not, wholly, to be attributed

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to the reflected beams of a burning ſun; for the Arabs, who live amidſt ſands, generally, have good eyes and a piercing ſight: nor muſt we think, with Haſſelquiſt (c), whoſe ſtay was ſhort in this country, that the diſeaſe was occaſioned by the exhalations of the ſtagnant waters; for the French merchants, whoſe houſes are on the banks of the canal of Grand Cairo, that for ſix months in the year contains water the ſmell of which is inſupportable, would be all blind, and for theſe fifty years not one has loſt his ſight (d). The origin of this diſeaſe, no doubt, is the Egyptian cuſtom of ſleeping in the open air, on the terraces of their houſes, or near their huts, during ſummer. The abundance of nitre in the atmoſphere, and of night dews, attack the delicate organ of ſight, and render them blind of one eye, or both. Eight thouſand of theſe unfortunate people are decently maintained in the great moſque of Grand Cairo.

The ſmall pox and ruptures are alſo very common in Egypt, without committing great

(c) Voyage d'Egypte.

(d) One, only, of theſe merchants became blind; but he lived in the city, not near the canal: wherefore this proves nothing in favour of Haſſelquiſt's opinion.

ravages. As to pulmonary diſeaſes, which, in cold countries, carry off ſo many, in the prime of youth, they are unknown in this happy climate. Thoſe, I am perſuaded, who are attacked by theſe cruel diſeaſes, would recover health in a country where the air, oily, warm, moiſt, and repleniſhed with the perfume of plants, and the oil of the earth, ſeems moſt favourable to the lungs *(e)*.

I muſt own, however, there is an unhealthy ſeaſon in Egypt. From February till the end of May, the ſouth winds blow, at intervals, and load the atmoſphere with a ſubtle duſt, which makes breathing difficult, and drive before them pernicious exhalations. Sometimes the heat becomes inſupportable, and the thermometer ſuddenly riſes twelve degrees. The inhabitants call this

(e) M. Paw pretends the Egyptians have, in all ages, been leprous; but Herodotus, Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus, who knew the country well, do not mention the diſeaſe; a proof it was unknown there, in their time. In the Archipelago iſlands I have ſeen leprous people, ſequeſtered from ſociety, as they were among the Jews, inhabiting huts, near the road ſide, and aſking alms: but in Egypt I never, in all my travels, met one of theſe wretches.

ſeaſon *Khamſin*, fifty, becauſe theſe winds are moſt felt between Eaſter and Whitſuntide, during which they eat rice, vegetables, freſh fiſh, and fruits; bathing frequently, and uſing plenty of perfumes, and lemon juice, with which regimen they prevent the dangerous effects of the Khamſin.

It muſt not be ſuppoſed that this wind, which, in a few hours, corrupts meat and animal ſubſtances, blows fifty days; Egypt would become a deſert. It ſeldom blows three days together, and, ſometimes, is only an impetuous whirlwind which rapidly paſſes, and injures only the traveller overtaken in the deſerts. When at Alexandria, in the month of May, a tempeſt of this kind ſuddenly aroſe, driving before it torrents of burning ſand: the ſerenity of the ſky diſappeared, a thick veil obſcured the Heavens, and the ſun became blood-coloured. The duſt penetrated even the chambers, and burnt the face and eyes. In four hours the tempeſt ceaſed, and the clearneſs of day appeared. Some wretches, in the deſerts, were ſuffocated, and ſeveral I ſaw brought dead, ſome of whom, bathed in cold water, were reſtored to life. The inhabitants of Grand

Cairo,

Cairo, being more inland, ſuffer more; and a French merchant, who was fat, died, ſuffocated by the heat. Similar phænomena have buried caravans and armies.

Several modern authors, with M. Paw at their head, have ſaid the peſtilence is native in Egypt. Were this true it would greatly diminiſh the advantages of the country, for neither fertility nor riches can preponderate againſt an evil ſo dreadful. I have collected information from the Egyptians, and foreign phyſicians who have lived there twenty or thirty years, which all tends to prove the contrary. They have aſſured me this epidemic diſeaſe was brought thither by the Turks, though it has committed great ravages. I myſelf ſaw the caravelles of the Grand Seignor, in 1778, unlade, according to cuſtom, the ſilks of Syria at Damietta. The plague is almoſt always on board, and they landed, without oppoſition, their merchandize, and their people who had the plague. It was the month of Auguſt, and, as the diſeaſe was then over in Egypt, it did not communicate that ſeaſon. The veſſels ſet ſail, and went to poiſon other places. The ſummer following, the ſhips of Conſtantinople, alike infected, came to the

the port of Alexandria, where they landed their diſeaſed, without injury to the inhabitants. Since this time, the ſhips of Smyrna have brought the contagion here, at the beginning of winter; it has ſpread over the country, and a part of the Egyptians have periſhed.

The following is an obſervation of ages. During the months of June, July, and Auguſt, if infected merchandize be brought into Egypt, the peſtilence expires of itſelf, and the people have no fears; and if brought at other ſeaſons, and communicated, it then ceaſes. A proof that it is not native in Egypt is that, except in time of great famine, it never breaks out in Grand Cairo, nor the inland towns, but always begins at ſea ports, on the arrival of Turkiſh veſſels, and travels to the capital, whence it proceeds as far as Syene. Having come to a period in Grand Cairo, and being again introduced, by the people of Upper Egypt, it renews, with greater fury, and, ſometimes, ſweeps off two or three hundred thouſand ſouls; but always ſtops in the month of June, or thoſe who catch it then are always cured. Should theſe ceſſations be attributed

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to the great heats, the salubrious north winds of summer, or the heavy dews? Perhaps these causes all contribute (f).

We ought not to pass over another striking remark, which is, that the excess of heat and cold are equally destructive of this dreadful contagion; winter kills it at Constantinople, and summer in Egypt; it seldom reaches the polar circle, and never passes the tropic. The caravans of Grand Cairo, Damascus, and Ispahan, which are sometimes infected,

(f) I cannot forbear citing an incident, Sir, which was told me by a captain, deserving credit, because it may afford information to those physicians who seek an antidote against this destructive evil. "I left Constantinople, "where the plague was raging, and my sailors had con- "tracted the disease. Two suddenly died, and, by assist- "ing them, I was infected. I felt excessive heat, which "made my blood boil: the disease seized my head, and I "perceived I had only a few moments to live. The lit- "tle remaining reason I had taught me to attempt an "experiment. I laid myself, quite naked, all night on "the deck; the heavy dews that fell penetrated to my "very bones, and, in a few hours, I could breathe freer, "and my head was better; my agitated blood became "calm, and, bathing, the morning after, in the sea, I "was perfectly cured." I know not, Sir, whether the remedy be infallible, but this I am certain, that no pestiferous matter, passed through water, will communicate the infection.

never

never propagate it at Mecca; and Yemen is safe from the plague.

History seldom mentions its appearance at Lacedemon, Athens, and Byzantium. When it spread in Greece, the people expelled it by keeping large fires in the open places, cleaning the canals, levelling hills which stopped the vapours, and preventing communication. Neither the air, sun, nor water of these fine countries are changed: the same salubrity would still exist were they inhabited by nations whose government watched over the well-being of the citizens, and the public safety. Smyrna and Constantinople are now the residence of this dreadful affliction, which must be attributed to the little value in which the Turkish government holds the lives of men, and their absurd ideas on predestination. Of what consequence is it to the despot though half his people perish, if he, shut up in his seraglio, be secure; or to the Mahometan, while the plague sweeps thousands from his side; since he must live till his hour is come, to endeavour to retard it would be vain?

When the infection pervades the European and Greek habitations, they purify them by

fumigating,

fumigating, leaving the windows open, that the air may freely circulate, and burning all the effects of the peſtiferous. Not ſo the Armenians and Turks; they neither burn nor purify. The Jews purchaſe, at a low price, the goods and wares which remain when the greateſt part of the family are deceaſed, and ſtore them up; which, when the plague is over, they ſell at a dear rate to thoſe who will purchaſe, and thus propagate the peſtilential poiſon *(g)*; again it kindles, and preſently cauſes new deſtruction. Thus this opprobrious nation, preferring gold to life, ſell the plague to Muſſulmen, who purchaſe it without fear, and ſleep with it till the time that, revived itſelf, it hurries them to the grave.

The European ſtands aghaſt with fear at the calamities it produces in Grand Cairo. According to the commiſſioners of the cuſtoms, this city contains from eight to nine hundred thouſand inhabitants. They are ſo crouded that two hundred citizens here, occupy leſs ſpace than thirty at Paris. The

(g) The laſt plague at Moſcow carried off two hundred thouſand people, and was brought by infected merchandize from the ſtorehouſes of the Jews.

ſtreets are very narrow, and always full of people, who croud and joſtle each other; and the paſſenger is, ſometimes, obliged to wait ſeveral minutes before he can make his way. One perſon with the plague will communicate it to a hundred; its progreſs is rapid, and ſpreads with the violence of a conflagration, while the wind augments its flames. The Mahometans die in their houſes, public ſquares, and ſtreets, without one of them endeavouring to ſave himſelf. *Ellmoukaddar*, ſay they, It is fate; yet have they the example of the Europeans, who, alone, eſcape the general diſaſter.

When the diſeaſe breaks out, the French ſhut up their diſtrict, and intercept all communication with the city. Arab ſervants, who live without, every day bring them ſuch proviſions as they want, and, except bread, which does not communicate the infection, they throw what they bring through an aperture, cut in each door, into a tub of water, by which it is purified, and uſed without fear. Theſe precautions give health and life to the French merchants, while ſurrounded with all the horrors of death. Burials, funeral proceſſions, and tears, are in every

ſtreet;

ſtreet; for when the Egyptians bury their relations and friends, there are hired mourners who make the air reſound with their lamentations *(b)*, and deſolate mothers, who, groaning, cover their faces with duſt, rend their cloaths, attending to the grave the child they have nurtured, and whom they ſoon after follow; for the Eaſtern people, more pious than we are, never forſake their infected relations, but aſſiſt them to the laſt moment, though almoſt certain their affection will be fatal. Theſe cries of deſpair, and funeral pomp, ſpread a general conſternation, and the French tremble in their aſylums. Who, indeed, could ſee unmoved, or unterrified, humanity ſuffering under a viſitation ſo fearful?

All do not die who are attacked; but, I have been aſſured, the plague ſometimes car-

(*b*) It was the ſame in the time of Herodotus. "When "a perſon of family dies, all the women relations bemire "their faces, and run through the city with their hair "diſhevelled, their boſoms bare, and their garments tucked "up; beating their breaſts, and uttering loud cries." Euterpe.

The iſlanders of the South Sea carry filial piety and maternal tenderneſs farther; deeply wounding themſelves in the face, at the death of their relations, and teſtifying their grief by ſtreams of blood.

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ries off three hundred thouſand people from Grand Cairo, Could you ſuppoſe, Sir, the example of the French, who, when the contagion is paſt, all leave their houſes ſafe, and in health, would not induce the Turks to uſe like precautions? Could you imagine that, throughout the whole Ottoman empire, quarantine is not performed at one ſingle port; or merits a nation like this to inhabit the country of the ancient Greeks, and Egyptians? The Turks have deſtroyed arts, commerce, and liberty; and ſuffer, for want of laws, their wretched ſlaves to periſh. They perpetuate the moſt dreadful ſcourge known to humanity, and change famous iſlands, flouriſhing cities, and kingdoms, into deſerts.

I have the honor to be, &c.

LETTER XIV.

ON THE VARIOUS INHABITANTS OF EGYPT.

The Copts, the deſcendants of the Egyptians, have loſt the genius and ſcience of their anceſtors. The Arabs are the next oldeſt inhabitants of the country, where they have twice reigned. Thoſe who, ſubject to the Beys, cultivate their lands, have loſt the good faith natural to their nation. Thoſe who live under their Sheiks have preſerved their honeſty and virtue. The Bedouins, inhabiting the deſerts, at open war with all caravans; but generous, hoſpitable, and faithful to their oaths. Mechanic arts exerciſed by the Chriſtians of Syria, Greeks and Jews; and few real Turks in Egypt.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I HAVE only ſlightly noticed the various nations who inhabit Egypt; and it is proper, Sir, to deſcribe their characters, cuſtoms, and

and arts, more circumſtantially. The Arabs, particularly, who ſurround, and, in part, occupy the kingdom, deſerve our attention. What I have to offer will explain how four millions of men are held in ſubjection by eight thouſand foreigners; and how a wandering nation has preſerved its liberty and laws encircled by formidable powers.

The real native Egyptians are the Copts, called ſo, according to ſome authors, from Cophtos, once a famous city in the Thebais; and to others from *Cobtos*, cut, becauſe they have always preſerved the uſe of circumciſion. Theſe, only, are the deſcendants of the ancient Egyptians; and who, more than two thouſand years, ſubjected by foreign powers, have loſt the genius and ſcience of their forefathers, though they have preſerved their cuſtoms, and the antient vulgar tongue. The tranſmitted knowledge from father to ſon of all arable lands, their value, and extent, occaſions them to be choſen clerks to the Beys, and ſtewards to the governors; and that they may conceal their accounts from theſe Lords, moſt of them are written in Coptic. They, notwithſtanding, do not perfectly underſtand the language; but, as their

miſſals, pentateuch, and various other works they poſſeſs, have an Arabic tranſlation, their antient language is not loſt; in ſome future time it, perhaps, may ſupply the learned with means of diſpelling the obſcurity of the firſt ages, during the reign of the Pharaohs, and remove the veil from the myſterious hieroglyphics.

The Copts embraced Chriſtianity at its birth; and Amrou, having conquered Egypt, permitted them the free exerciſe of the Chriſtian religion: ſince when they have ever had churches, prieſts, biſhops, and a patriarch, who has fixed his reſidence at Grand Cairo ever ſince it became the capital. Adhering to the rites of Monotheliſm, their ignorance will not ſuffer them to diſcover the dereliction into which they are fallen, and in which they are ſo confirmed, by obſtinacy and a ſectary ſpirit, that nothing could oblige them to change their religion. Numerous ſuperſtitious practices, received from their anceſtors, are mingled in their worſhip; but they are mild, humane, and hoſpitable. Paternal tenderneſs and filial love conſtitute their domeſtic happineſs, where every tie of blood is cheriſhed and honored. Inland trade,

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the art of hatching eggs, and raiſing bees, are almoſt the whole of their knowledge. They often enrich themſelves by the adminiſtrations entruſted to them; but do not tranquilly enjoy the fruits of their labours. The Bey who beholds them opulent, often, ſtrips them of their riches, without mercy; and happy are they can they purchaſe life with the loſs of fortune. Such oppreſſions do not excite revolt; their want of energy keeps them enchained in poverty and ſubjection, which they ſupport without murmuring.

After the Copts, the Arabs are the moſt antient people of Egypt, where they twice have reigned. Their firſt dominion was in the remote ages of antiquity, and, according to ſome authors, before the time of Joſeph. The ſecond begun in the ſeventh century and ended in the twelfth. Two-thirds of the preſent inhabitants are Arabs, the manners of whom differ according to their mode of life. Thoſe who, become huſbandmen, are governed by their foreign maſters, preſent a ſtriking example to philoſophers of the influence of laws over men. Beneath a tyrannic government, they have loſt that good faith

and uprightneſs which characterize their nation. They take part in their maſter's quarrels. Villages arm againſt villages, and towns againſt towns; and, during the revolutions which are continually reviving in Grand Cairo, the country preſents a frightful ſcene of carnage and horror; flames devouring the harveſt, and the blood of the labourer ſhed on the earth he had tilled. Hatred being eternal among theſe people, and the mother imparting, with her milk, the deſire of vengeance to her ſon, men are born here for mutual deſtruction. Thoſe degenerate Arabs called *Fellah*, render the navigation of the Nile exceedingly dangerous, attack boats in the dark, maſſacre paſſengers, ſeize their effects, and commit every kind of outrage.

Another diviſion of the Arabs, who may be called huſbandmen, are governed by their Sheiks, who poſſeſs various principalities in the Thebais. This word, ſignifying elder, is the proud ſign of their power. Now, as heretofore, they are the judge, the pontif, and the ſovereign of their people; yet governing more like fathers of families than kings. Theſe venerable patriarchs uſually take their meals at the doors of their houſes,

or tents, inviting all comers: riſing from table, they cry aloud, *Whoever is hungry let him, in the name of God, come and eat*, which is not a barren form; any man, whoever he may be, has a right to ſit down and feed on what he finds. Suffer me to cite the paſſage where Abraham receives the angels, that you may compare the manners of this people with thoſe of ancient times *(i)*.

" And the Lord appeared unto Abraham,
" in the plains of Mamre: and he ſat in the
" tent door in the heat of the day.

" And he lifted up his eyes and looked,
" and lo, three men ſtood by him: and when
" he ſaw them, he ran to meet them from
" the tent-door, and bowed himſelf toward
" the ground,

" And ſaid, My Lord, if now I have
" found favour in thy ſight, paſs not away,
" I pray thee, from thy ſervant:

" Let a little water, I pray you, be fetch-
" ed, and waſh your feet, and reſt yourſelves
" under the tree:

" And I will fetch a morſel of bread, and
" comfort ye your hearts; after that you

(*i*) Geneſis, chap. XVIII. ver. 1—8.

" ſhall paſs on: for therefore are ye come to
" your ſervant. And they ſaid, So do as
" thou haſt ſaid.

" And Abraham haſtened into the tent
" unto Sarah, and ſaid, Make ready quickly
" three meaſures of fine meal, knead it, and
" make cakes upon the hearth.

" And Abraham ran unto the herd, and
" fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it
" unto a young man; and he haſted to dreſs
" it.

" And he took butter and milk, and the
" calf which he had dreſſed, and ſet it be-
" fore them; and he ſtood by them under
" the tree, and they did eat."

The Arabs give the like reception to ſtrangers and travellers who approach their tents; ſervants waſh their feet, women knead unleavened bread, bake it on the hearth, and ſerve them roaſt mutton, milk, honey, and the beſt proviſions they poſſeſs. The little taxes which the Sheiks levy over their domains do not oppreſs their ſubjects, who love them. The Arab comes with his complaints to their tribunal, and, not being complicated, the light of nature, reaſon, and the ſimple and clear laws of the Koran are ſufficient, immediately,

immediately, to terminate differences. Their judgments are, moſtly, dictated by equity, and, under this paternal government, man, enjoying all his liberty, is attached to his prince by ties, only, of reſpect and gratitude, to whom he ſpeaks freely, and praiſes or blames as he finds occaſion. I will cite a paſſage which ſhews how far the Arabs carry this frankneſs.

Elmanſor, the ſecond of the Abaſſide Caliphs, founded Bagdad, in 769, became famous by his victories and power, and the capacity with which he governed immenſe territories. His affability was extreme, yet all theſe good qualities were tarniſhed by unbounded avarice. An Arab, one day, approaching him, ſaid, "Health to the father of Jafar"—"Health be to thee," anſwered Elmanſor—"Thou art of the generous race of Haſchem; grant me a ſmall part of the immenſe treaſure thou poſſeſſeſt."—"Not to me, but to the Apoſtle of God, ſhouldeſt thou addreſs thy prayers."—"My garments are torn, and age has robbed me of ſtrength."—"Let us change, take mine."—Elmanſor, immediately ſtripping, gave him his clothes; but

but the Arab, perceiving they were worn out and patched, ſaid, Art thou not acquainted, Caliph, with the ſentence of the ſon of Harima? "The rich miſer, who cloathes "himſelf in rags, is nevertheleſs ſubject to "death."

Thus freely do the Arabs ſpeak to their Chiefs. Devoted to their intereſt, the leaſt token from them will make them arm to repel the oppreſſion of the Turks, who never could ſubject them; for, if victorious, they remain in their territories; if vanquiſhed, they abandon them, taking their wives, children, and flocks, amid the deſerts. Profiting, afterwards, by times of trouble and diſorder, they return armed, attack their foes, and regain their poſſeſſions. Were theſe Chiefs to unite their forces, and form a league againſt the Turks, they would eaſily drive them from Egypt, and become its maſters. But the policy of the Beys prevents ſuch a union, by ſowing diſſention, aiding the feeble, confirming the authority, only, of thoſe whom they think favour their own views; and, eſpecially, by fraud or poiſon, taking off the Emirs whoſe power, talents, or ambition they dread.

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The Arabs are the beſt of people; ignorant of the vices of poliſhed nations, incapable of diſguiſe, they know neither falſehood nor knavery. Haughty and generous, they repel inſult by arms, and never employ treachery; hoſpitality is ſacred among them, their houſes and tents are open to travellers of all religions, and their gueſts are treated with as much reſpect and affection as their own kindred; and ſo far is this honourable virtue carried, that, ſhould the enemy, whoſe death they have determined, ſubmit to come and drink coffee with them, he has nothing more to fear. This, only, can make them forget reſentment, and renounce the pleaſure of revenge. You will form an idea of their honeſty by the following fact, of which I was a witneſs. An Arab Sheik had long, annually, come to the diſtrict of the French, where he took up goods on credit, of a merchant, ſtill coming the following year, at the ſame time, bringing the money, and taking freſh merchandize. Sickneſs, one year, prevented him from coming, himſelf, at the appointed time; but he ſent his ſon, with the money, and continued a trade equally honourable to both nations.

A third

A third ſpecies of Arabs is compriſed under the general denomination of Bedaoui, inhabitants of the deſerts, a paſtoral people who reſide in the burning ſolitudes which ſtretch to the eaſt and weſt of Egypt. They are divided into tribes, meddle not with agriculture, and feed on barley, dates, and the fleſh and milk of their herds, which they drive into the vallies, where they find water and paſturage. Having exhauſted one place, they load their camels with their tents, wives, and children, mount their horſes, and the whole tribe ſeeks a new abode. Maſters of the deſerts, they are the enemies of all caravans, attack them wherever they can find them, and force them either to fight or pay tribute. If the reſiſtance be too powerful, they retreat without fear of purſuit; if they conquer, they pillage every body, divide the ſpoil, but never kill any one, unleſs to revenge the death of their companions. A traveller putting himſelf under their protection has nothing to fear, either for life or wealth, for their word is ſacred; and neither have I read in hiſtory, nor learnt in theſe countries, where they inhabit, that any Arab ever violated ſworn faith.

faith. This is a characteriſtic mark which diſtinguiſhes them from all other nations. Their love of plunder never makes them forget the rights of hoſpitality, which are not leſs honoured by them than by the huſbandmen Arabs. After the miſeries M. de St. Germain underwent, croſſing Suez, he came, expiring, to the tent of a Bedouin, to whoſe generous cares he owed his life, and who conducted him to Grand Cairo, as ſoon as his health was recovered. M. Pagès fled over the ſands of Arabia deſerta, with ſeven Arabs; he had loſt his water and proviſions, and, falling from his camel, was in danger of being ſacrificed to the reſentment of an inſulted tribe. One of his companions alighted, and, at the riſk of his life, took him up behind him, till they came into a place of ſafety. The whole proviſion of the Arabs, during the journey, was a barley cake a day, and not a large one. This they divided into eight portions, and the one they gave the ſtranger was always twice as much as their own.

An exceſſive love of liberty occaſions them to prefer the dreary wilderneſs, where they live independent, to the rich plains of Egypt, where

where they muſt live ſlaves. Government has ſeveral times offered them lands, which they have conſtantly refuſed, becauſe they muſt have ſubmitted to tyrants; and this independent ſpirit, ſo well pourtrayed in the Scriptures, they have inviolably preſerved from the time of Iſhmael, their father. Herodotus, one of the moſt ancient hiſtorians, ſpeaks of them thus:—" Cambyſes *(k)*, de-
" ſirous to lead his armies into Egypt, ſent
" ambaſſadors to the King of the Arabs,
" to require a ſafe paſſage through his coun-
" try, which was granted, and the two na-
" tions promiſed mutual faith. The Arabs
" are, of all people, the moſt faithful to
" their oaths. The manner in which they
" make their treaties is thus: one of them,
" ſtanding between the contracting parties,
" lacerates the palm of their hands, with a
" ſharp ſtone; then, collecting wool from
" their garments, he ſtains it with blood,
" and rubs ſeven ſtones with it, which are
" placed between them, invoking Bacchus
" and Urania. If the perſon ſoliciting al-
" liance be a foreigner, he afterwards be-

(*k*) Herodotus Thalia.

" comes

" comes their ſacred gueſt; if a country-
" man, they regard him as one of the tribe
" with whom he has formed this compact,
" which is ever after inviolable." The Arabs no longer obſerve the ſame ceremonies; they now are ſatisfied, when they treat, with mutually ſhaking hands, and ſwearing, by their head, they will faithfully obſerve the conditions ſtipulated, and they never are perjured.

Diodorus Siculus, many ages after Herodotus, paints them in the ſame colours. I will cite a paſſage, becauſe it will ſhew how little theſe people have changed, and becauſe, perhaps, it is the ſole portrait hiſtory affords which, after a lapſe of eighteen hundred years, reſembles the ſame nation.

" The wandering Arabs *(l)* inhabit the
" open plains, having no houſes; they
" themſelves call their country a wilderneſs,
" and chuſe not their abode in places where
" rivers and ſprings abound, leſt theſe al-
" lurements might bring enemies into their
" neighbourhood. Their law, or their cuſ-
" tom, forbids them to ſow corn, plant

(l) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 19.

" fruit

" fruit trees, drink wine, or inhabit houſes;
" which whoever ſhould violate would in-
" fallibly be puniſhed with death, being per-
" ſuaded that the man, who would ſubject
" himſelf to ſuch wants, would preſently
" ſubject himſelf to maſters, for their pre-
" ſervation. Some have herds of camels,
" others flocks of ſheep, and the latter are
" the moſt wealthy; excluſive of the gains
" of their flocks, they come to ſea ports and
" ſell incenſe, myrrh, and other precious
" aromatics, which they obtain from the
" inhabitants of Arabia Felix. Jealous of
" their liberty to exceſs, they fly, at the
" approach of an army, to the recluſes of
" their deſerts, the extent of which ſerves
" them as a rampart. Finding no water,
" an enemy dares not purſue; while the
" Arabs are ſupplied by reſervoirs hidden
" under ground, and known only to them-
" ſelves. The ſoil being a ſoft clay, they
" find means to dig vaſt, deep, and ſquare,
" ciſterns; each ſide a hundred feet (or
" plethron) which, filling with rain water,
" they cloſe up the entrance, and, render-
" ing the ground uniform, leave only ſome
" ſlight mark, imperceptible to any but
" themſelves.

"themſelves. They accuſtom their cattle "to drink only once in three days *(m)*, "that, when obliged to fly acroſs parched "ſands, they may ſupport thirſt. They "themſelves live on fleſh, milk, and the "commoneſt fruits. The pepper-tree grows "in their country *(n)*, and they have much "wild honey, which they drink with wa-"ter. There are other Arabs, who culti-"vate the earth, and, like the Syrians, pay "tribute; differing from them in nothing, "except that they do not inhabit houſes. "Such, nearly, are the manners of theſe "people." This ſketch, by an enlightened hiſtorian, is remarkably exact, and exhibits the Bedouins of the preſent times. Permit me to quote a paſſage, from the ſame author, which is finely deſcriptive of their honeſty, and the knavery of the Greeks. "The Nabathean Arabs forſook the deſerts, "to go to a famous fair; leaving, at their

(*m*) The Abyſſinians, who return by Girja into their own country, having a deſert of ſeven days journey to croſs, accuſtom their camels to live thus long without water.

(*n*) I believe Diodorus is miſtaken, and that pepper is brought to Arabia by the ſhips coming from India.

" departure, their wealth, children, and
" wives, in the caverns of a mountain;
" which, being two days journey from any
" habitable place, and defended by its ſitu-
" ation, and burning ſolitudes, ſeemed ſafe
" from enemies. The Greeks, however,
" thirſting for gold, took this opportunity
" to attack them. Athenæus, a comman-
" der under Antigonus, left Idumea with a
" body of light armed troops, marched
" 2200 ſtadia in three days and three nights,
" arrived at the aſylum of the Nabatheans,
" forced it, killed a part of the unfortunate
" people they found, took a great number
" of priſoners, and carried off the incenſe,
" myrrh, and five hundred talents of ſilver,
" which had been there depoſited. Heat
" and fatigue obliged them to halt 200 ſtadia
" from the rock, where a haſty camp was
" formed. The ſoldiers, overwhelmed with
" laſſitude, and thinking they had nothing
" to fear, yielded to the ſweets of ſleep.
" The Nabatheans, however, hearing of
" this invaſion, immediately departed, and
" arrived at their abode. The complaints
" of the wounded, and the blood of the
" aged, inſpired horror; they flew to ven-
" geance;

" geance, and ſoon came up with the ene-
" my. Some priſoners, profiting by the
" negligence of the Greeks, got free, and
" informed them of the ſtate they were in.
" The Arabs, hearing this, attacked the
" camp on all ſides, which, favoured by
" darkneſs, they penetrated, maſſacred the
" ſleeping ſoldiers, and transfixed thoſe with
" their darts who roſe to take arms. The
" ſlaughter was general, only fifty horſe
" eſcaping, moſt of them wounded. The
" Nabatheans, having recovered their pri-
" ſoners and wealth, brought them back,
" and, after giving the Greeks this leſſon,
" wrote to Antigonus, to complain of Athe-
" næus, and juſtify their conduct. The
" monarch diſclaimed the act of his general,
" ſaid it was undertaken without his know-
" ledge, and that they were juſtified in their
" defence; uſing this diſſimulation to ren-
" der them unſuſpicious, and hoping to find
" a more favourable opportunity to revenge
" his army's defeat. But the Arabs,
" placing little faith in the Greeks, kept
" on their guard, and ſet centinels on the
" heights, to give intelligence of the ap-
" proach of the enemy, and they ſoon pro-

" fited by their prudence. Some months
" having elapſed, Antigonus ſent eight thou-
" ſand choſen men againſt them, command-
" ed by his ſon Demetrius, who marched
" his army through unfrequented places,
" that he might take them by ſurprize.
" Warned by their ſpies, the Nabatheans
" ſent their flocks into the depths of the
" deſerts, and fortified themſelves on the
" mountain, which Demetrius found guard-
" ed by their brave youth, by whom he
" was vigorouſly oppoſed. After ineffec-
" tually attacking them with his whole
" force, he retreated, in ſeeming flight, but
" returned to the aſſault on the morrow,
" with no greater ſucceſs. An Arab, then,
" with a loud voice, thus called: Where-
" fore, O king Demetrius, wouldeſt thou
" war with a people who inhabit a wilder-
" neſs, without water, wine, or food, and
" containing none of all the things which
" excite, among you, avarice and ſtrife?
" The dread of ſlavery brought us to the
" deſert, deprived of all the allurements men
" with ſuch avidity ſeek, and has reduced
" us to a wild and ſolitary life, which makes
" us incapable of doing you injury. We
" therefore

" therefore intreat you, and the king your " father, to moleſt us not: nay, we will " ſend you preſents, to induce you to retire, " and account the Nabatheans among your " faithful friends; and, ſhould not theſe " motives prevail, neceſſity ſoon will force " you to forſake a wilderneſs, where you " will want water and food. We never " will ſubject ourſelves to other manners. " What, then, do you hope from this ex- " pedition? The moſt you can obtain will " be ſome few ſlaves, whom force, only, " can hold in ſervitude, and who never will " bend to your modes and cuſtoms.—Struck " by this diſcourſe, Demetrius made peace " with the Nabatheans."

Such, Sir, were the Arabs, before and after Alexander, and ſuch are they ſtill. The love of independance ſtill lives in their hearts, and their averſion to all foreign ſubjection ſtill makes them prefer the dreary deſert to the moſt captivating plains. Liberty has ſo many charms that, to obtain it, they firmly ſupport hunger, thirſt, and the ſcorching ſun. Sometimes humbled, but never enſlaved, they have braved all the powers of the earth, and ſhook off the chains in

which other nations have alternately been bound. The Romans, maſters of the world, loſt the armies they ſent to conquer their country. The Egyptians, Perſians, and Ottomans, never could ſubdue them. Thus, this proud people is the ſole nation which has preſerved that haughtineſs of character, generoſity, and inviolable fidelity, which ſo highly honour humanity. Deceit and perjury they know not. Ignorant of, though not deſpiſing, ſcience, ſound reaſon, uprightneſs, and elevation of ſoul, diſtinguiſh them from all the orientals. In the preſence of ſtrangers, as in the preſence of their princes, they preſerve the dignity of man, which they never debaſe by vile flattery. Serious, but not ſurly, acute, but not oſtentatious, frank, yet not rude, they are acquainted with the charms of a converſation ſometimes chearful and ſometimes wiſe. Their friendſhip is ſacred, and their friend is their brother. Nor are they ſtrangers to delicacy of ſentiment: their poems are pictures of that ardent paſſion they reſpire, under their fiery ſky; and, ſometimes, of that gallantry which ſeems to belong to people more poliſhed. Theſe, Sir, are the Arabs which

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the genius of a ſingle man united, to the deſtruction of thrones, the conquering of kingdoms, and the impoſing of laws on two thirds of the earth. Their conqueſts are loſt, but their character, religion, and manners, preſerved. Should another Mahomet ariſe, in the eaſt, capable of collecting their ſcattered tribes, he again might ſubject Aſia, and Africa, to their dominion. The philoſopher, who would ſtudy man in his primitive ſtate, ſhould reſide among the Arabs, and not with people whoſe mind, heart, and affections, have been debaſed by deſpotiſm, and ſervitude.

Except the Copts and Arabs, the Mograbians, or weſtern Mahometans, are the moſt numerous inhabitants of Egypt: they devote themſelves ſome to trade, and ſome to arms. Their nation ought not to be judged by the individuals at Grand Cairo: thoſe who become ſoldiers are adventurers, moſt of them guilty of crimes, and baniſhed from their country, by the fear of juſtice. Theſe mercenary, faithleſs, lawleſs, ſoldiers abandon themſelves to every exceſs, and always ſell themſelves to that Bey who is the beſt bidder.

There are not many real Turks here, excluſive of the Janiſſaries and Aſſabs; who, abuſing their power, pillage Egyptians, and foreigners, and employ every means to amaſs great riches. They ſometimes become formidable to the Pacha and Beys; and ſell their ſuffrages. Like the Mograbians, they are neither diſciplined, underſtand the art of gunnery, nor would it be poſſible for them to oppoſe the military ſcience of the Europeans.

The Syrian Chriſtians, Greeks, and Jews, addict themſelves entirely to commerce, exchange, and the mechanic arts. Their ductile cunning promotes them, occaſionally, to be commiſſioners of the cuſtoms, and receivers of the revenues of Egypt; but their honeſty may not be depended on, and their arts ſhould always be watched. Having obtained power, they employ it to oppreſs European Merchants, invent exactions, and ſhackle their commerce. Many of them are Goldſmiths, and work in gold, ſilver, and jewellery, with tolerable ſkill. Their performances in fillagree are eſtimable. Several of them have eſtabliſhed manufactories of light ſtuffs, made from Bengal cotton and

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the ſilk of Syria, which are purchaſed by the natives. Though well woven, theſe ſtuffs fail in the dye, the colours being neither ſo vivid, nor ſo unfading, as thoſe of India; which we muſt attribute to the ignorance of the artiſts, for Egypt produces excellent indigo, carthamus, and various dyes. Their linen cloths have the ſame defect. Egyptian flax, formerly ſo renowned, has loſt nothing of its excellence: the fibres are long, ſoft, and ſilky, and would make beautiful cloth; but the ſpinners are ſo bad that their linen is very coarſe.

The amount of theſe inhabitants, Sir, ſo different in their manners, religion, and nations, is near four millions; whom eight thouſand Mamluks govern. This will not long excite your ſurprize, when you recollect that, under Auguſtus, three cohorts were ſufficient to guard the Thebais; as Strabo informs us, who, one of the firſt hiſtorians of antiquity, was an ocular witneſs of the fact.

"The Egyptian is an extremely populous, "but not a warlike, nation: nor are the "neighbouring people more ſo. Cornelius "Gallus, the firſt Roman governor ſent to "Egypt,

" Egypt, marched againſt the inhabitants of " Heroopolis *(o)*, who had revolted, and " again ſubjected them with a few ſoldiers. " Severe taxes having excited a general re- " bellion in the Thebais, it was immediately " quelled, on his appearance. Petronius, " after him, heading a few cohorts, repelled " the impetuoſity of many thouſand Alex- " andrians, who had attacked him, leaving " a great number dead on the field of battle. " Ælius Gallus, entering Arabia with a part " of the troops that garriſoned Egypt, prov- " ed, by his victories, how little theſe people " were addicted to war; and, had it not " been for the treachery of Syllæus, would " have conquered Arabia Felix. During his " abſence, the Ethiopians made an irruption " into the Thebais, threw down the ſtatues " of Cæſar, carried off the feeble garriſons " of Syene, Philæ and Elephantina. Petro- " nius purſued them, with ten thouſand foot " and eight hundred horſe; and, though " their army was thirty thouſand ſtrong, " forced them to retire to Pſelcha, a city in

(o) This city is abſolutely deſtroyed, and its ruins buried under the ſands of the iſthmus of Suez.

" Ethiopia. Not obtaining a reſtitution of
" the captives, by his ambaſſadors, he pene-
" trated their country, and gave them battle.
" Their ill-armed, undiſciplined, troops
" could not withſtand the Roman valour:
" ſome fled to the deſerts, ſome to the capi-
" tal, and others eſcaped, by ſwimming, to
" an iſland in the river. Among the latter
" were ſeveral generals of Candace, the war-
" like queen of Ethiopia. Petronius croſſed
" the Nile, in boats, took them all priſoners,
" ſent them to the city of Alexandria, and
" afterwards laid ſiege to Pſelcha, which he
" ſubjected, a part of the inhabitants periſh-
" ing in the attack. He next marched for
" Premnis, a place fortified by nature, to
" arrive at which he croſſed the vaſt ſandy
" deſerts where the army of Cambyſes was
" ſmothered in the ſands *(p)*. Carrying it
" by aſſault, he then beſieged Napata, where
" was the ſon of Candace, in a royal palace.
" The queen, from a neighbouring fortreſs,
" ſent ambaſſadors to treat of peace; offering
" to reſtore the captives, and ſtatues, to the

(*p*) This confirms what I have cited from Herodotus.

" Roman

" Roman general, who, without liſtening to " propoſals, attacked and vanquiſhed the " place; but the young prince eſcaped by " flight. Believing it would be difficult to " penetrate farther, he returned to Egypt; " carrying with him great wealth, and " leaving four hundred men to garriſon " Premnis, with ſtores and proviſions for " two years."

This paſſage, Sir, perfectly deſcribes the imbecility of the Egyptians, and Ethiopians, in the Roman times; and they are ſtill the ſame. Long ſlavery has but extinguiſhed the little energy they had; and their ignorance of arms even ſurpaſſes their cowardice. During the alarm which civil war ſpread through Grand Cairo, we heard the ſix pieces of artillery play from the caſtle on the city, and obſerved that the gunners employed half an hour in loading them; for this was the ſpace of time between each diſcharge. You will judge, Sir, whether ſuch troops could, a moment, withſtand a few European regiments. Any warlike nation that ſhould attack Egypt would conquer it, without impediment, and Ethiopia, with equal facility; after which,

maſters

maſters of their gold and their waters, they might ſend the Nile, at pleaſure, through Egypt, where they might maintain inexhauſtible plenty.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

ON THE MARRIAGES OF THE EGYPTIANS.

Marriage a church-ceremony among Chriſtians, and indiſſoluble. The Legiſlature of Arabia, guided by cuſtom, and on the authority of the Patriarchs, has permitted divorces, but has fixed bounds to the caprice of men. Marriage ceremonies obſerved by Mahometans and Copts.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

MARRIAGE, among Chriſtians, is a holy rite, and indiſſoluble. Laws, in certain caſes, ſuſpend, but do not annihilate its effects; wherefore, is is neceſſary the parties ſhould perfectly know each other, and that their wills ſhould be free, ſince their own happineſs, and that of their children, depend on this knowledge, and this freedom. Oriental manners, ſo different from European, have obliged legiſlators to render wedlock a leſs permanent

permanent contract. Here the two ſexes live ſeparate, and never converſe together. How then can a young man and maiden, who have not ſeen each other, ſwear inviolable faith and love? Such an oath, expoſing them to perjury, would but be a ſource of diſorder. Mahomet, well acquainted with the heart of man, and authorized by the Patriarchs, has permitted repudiation. After endeavouring to prevent it, by preſcribing that reſpect, that tenderneſs, which ought to be the ſupreme pleaſure of huſband and wife, he adds, "Thoſe who ſhall ſwear never "more to have commerce with their wives "ſhall wait four months (q), during which "if they return to them, the Lord is kind "and merciful.—If divorce be ſtill determined "on, God ſees and knows all things."

This, Sir, authorizes repudiation, but leaves God the judge of its lawfulneſs. In the continuation of this chapter, which is an abridgment of the laws of Mahomet, the

(q) When a Mahometan ſwears never more to know his wife, four months delay are granted him, during which he may reconcile himſelf to her, but if the time be paſt he muſt put her from him. She is free, and may marry another. *Koran, chap.* 2.

legiſlature

legiſlature endeavours to preſcribe bounds to the ficklenefs of man. A muſſulman may not take a wife without aſſigning her a portion, according to his ſubſtance. If he wiſhes to part from her, he ſends for the judge, declares in his preſence, he puts her from him, and, when the four months of probation are expired, he returns the wealth ſhe brought, and the portion ſtipulated in the marriage contract. If they have children, the huſband detains the boys, and the wife takes away the girls; after which they become free, and may marry elſewhere. Wives are not ſubjected, as is ſuppoſed in Europe, to eternal ſlavery; having real cauſe of complaint, they implore protection from the laws, and break their chains: but, in this caſe, they loſe their portion, and the wealth they brought to the houſe of the huſband, though they recover their liberty.

A Mahometan ſometimes ſwears, without ſufficient reaſon, never more to know his wife; but, repenting, he may be reconciled to her, without the mediation of the Cadi. The law-giver, in the following verſe, has ſet bounds to this caprice. "He, who thrice "ſhall repudiate one woman, may not re-

" claim her, till ſhe ſhall have been received " in the bed of another huſband, who ſhall " repudiate her alſo. They may then come " together again, if they believe they can " obſerve the commandments of God *(r)*."

A huſband thus circumſtanced, and who fears a ſeparation himſelf has ſought, endeavours to elude the law, ſeeks a friend, on whom he can rely, ſhuts him up with his wife, in the preſence of witneſſes, and waits the conſequence of this ſingular ſcene, at the door. The dilemma is a delicate one, and does not always ſucceed as he could wiſh. If the friend, leaving the chamber, ſays— " Behold my wife, whom I put away"— the firſt huſband recovers his right: but if, forgetting friendſhip in the arms of love, he declares her his wife, he takes her with him without oppoſition. By ſuch laws has Mahomet endeavoured to enſure peace and happineſs in marriage; making it a ſocial ſtate, the duration of which ought inceſſantly to be promoted, by reciprocal attentions, and the birth of children. Nor do the married often uſe the liberty they poſſeſs; divorces are much leſs common than they are

(r) *Koran, chap.* 2.

uſually thought to be: many are even ſatisfied with one wife, and do not profit by the law which allows four. This moderation muſt be attributed to the ſeparate and retired lives they lead, the charms of which they ſtrongly feel, and, particularly, to the affection which both huſband and wife have for their children, who, educated in the houſe of their fathers, become their ſupport and conſolation.

The female relations make matches for the young men. They meet moſt of the maidens of the city at the bath, whom they perfectly deſcribe; and, the choice made, the alliance is mentioned to the father of the female, the portion ſpecified, and, if he conſents, they make him preſents. The parties agreed, the female relations and friends of the virgin take her to the bath, ſtrip her with ceremony, bathe, knead, and perfume her, ſtain the nails of her hands and feet, of a golden yellow, with *henna*, blacken her eye-lids with *copel*, ſprinkle precious eſſences in her hair, and waſh her whole body with roſe water. Without other ornament than their long and floating treſſes, the matrons lead the noviciate round the

apartment,

apartment, and prepare her for the myſteries of hymen, calm the palpitations of timidity, recount the happineſs ſhe will poſſeſs, and vaunt the beauty and wealth of her young huſband. The remainder of the day is paſſed in feaſting, dancing, and ſinging ſongs adapted to the occaſion.

On the morrow, the ſame perſons go to her houſe, tear her, as it were, violently, from the arms of her afflicted mother, and triumphantly conduct her to the houſe of her huſband. The proceſſion uſually begins in the evening; dancers go before her, with their feet tied to ſtilts, and carrying balancing poles; numerous ſlaves diſplay the effects, furniture, and jewels deſtined to her uſe; troops of dancing girls keep time with their inſtruments; matrons, richly cloathed, walk with a grave pace; and the young bride appears under a magnificent canopy, borne by four ſlaves, ſuſtained by her mother and ſiſters, and entirely covered by a veil, embroidered with gold, pearls, and diamonds. A long file of flambeaux illumine the proceſſion, and the Almai, in chorus, occaſionally ſing verſes in praiſe of the bride and bridegroom. I have twenty times be-

held ſuch pompous proceſſions, in the ſtreets of Cairo, where the longeſt route is always choſen; they being vain of diſplaying their whole ſplendour, on theſe occaſions.

When come to the houſe of the huſband, the women go on the firſt floor, whence they perceive, through the blinds of a gallery, all that paſſes below. The men, who are aſſembled in the hall, do not mix with them, but paſs a part of the night in banquetting, drinking coffee and ſherbet, and hearing muſic. The Almai deſcend, throw off their veils, and diſplay their agility and addreſs; exhibiting, to the ſound of the tambour de baſque, cymbals and caſtanets, pantomimes in which they repreſent the combats of Hymen, the ſtruggles of the bride, and the artifices of love. Nothing can exceed their voluptuous poſtures, and licentious attitudes; they want not words to make themſelves underſtood; their unreſerved geſtures cannot be miſtaken. Several times have I been preſent at ſuch like ſcenes, and always ſurpriſed that a people, who, in public, reſpect women ſo much, ſhould ſo paſſionately love laſcivious dances. Having ended, the Almai, in chorus, chaunt the epithalamium

(ſo

(ſo famous among the Greeks) and extol the allurements of the bride, more beauteous than the moon, freſher than the roſe, ſweeter than the jaſmin, and the bliſs of that mortal who ſhall enjoy ſo many charms. During the ceremony, ſhe ſeveral times paſſes before the bridegroom, and always in different dreſſes, to diſplay her wealth and elegance. The gueſts having retired, the huſband enters the nuptial chamber, the veil is removed, and, for the firſt time, he beholds his wife. If a maiden, tokens of virginity muſt appear; otherwiſe he may ſend her back, on the morrow, to her parents, which is the greateſt diſhonour a family can ſuſtain; wherefore, there is no country on earth where girls are guarded with ſuch care, or where the huſband is more certain to eſpouſe a virgin.

Such are the laws and ceremonies of marriage among the Egyptians, which rich and poor ſcrupulouſly obſerve. The daughter of the mechanic is, in like manner, conducted to her ſpouſe; the only difference conſiſts in the ſurrounding paraphernalia. Inſtead of flambeaux, they burn fir, in braziers carried on poles, and the ſtilt-dancers

and tambour de baſque, ſupply the want of Almai, and muſicians. The poor man's daughter, wanting attendants and canopies, borrows a veil, and marches to the ſound of cymbals, or bits of metal, which her indigent followers ſtrike in time, without tune.

Nearly the ſame ceremonies are obſerved by the Copts; but they have a cuſtom of betrothing young girls only ſix or ſeven years old, which is done by putting a ring on the finger. They often obtain permiſſion, from her friends, to educate her, till ſhe arrives at puberty. Divorces, bathing, and marriage proceſſions, are alſo practiſed by the ſchiſmatic Chriſtians; only they can have but one wife at a time. You will find deſcriptions, in the Arabian Tales, much reſembling thoſe I have ſent you: the author of that agreeable work, being perfectly acquainted with the manners and cuſtoms of his country, has ably depicted them; and, by the truth of his portraits, rendered his book ineſtimable. Failing in this, our Oriental romance writers offend moſt; and, having never travelled in the Eaſt, call the whims

whims of fancy Oriental tales: Turks, Arabs, and Perſians, are ridiculouſly diſguiſed under a French habit, and groteſque deſcriptions are given inſtead of truth and nature.

I have the honor to be, &c.

LETTER XVI.

REVOLUTIONS OF COMMERCE IN EGYPT.

State of commerce under the Pharaohs, Perſians, and Ptolemies. Commerce created a powerful navy under the Romans, and, directed by the Egyptians, penetrated to Bengal: become feeble under the monarchs of the Lower Empire: was almoſt loſt under the Arabs: re-eſtabliſhed by the Venetians, who opened the ports of Egypt, but, loſing their trade, to the Portugueſe, loſt alſo their ſhipping, and diſtant provinces. An account of the preſent commerce of Egypt.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

IN the preceding letters, Sir, I have mentioned ſome particulars relative to the trade of the principal cities of Egypt; but theſe ſcattered ideas would be unſatisfactory, in

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an age when all the courts of Europe hold commerce to be an inexhauſtible ſource of wealth and power. I will endeavour to give you a haſty ſketch of its revolutions, from the moſt remote antiquity to the preſent; and, however difficult the taſk, the utility that may reſult to my country encourages me in the undertaking.

The Pharaohs knew the benefits of commerce. The numerous canals they dug had a two-fold intent, that of ſpreading fertility and tranſporting the productions of the country throughout the kingdom. The fairs eſtabliſhed in the Delta, and the Thebais, united the inhabitants of the diſtant provinces. Each brought the fruit of his induſtry, and, by mutual barter, the whole nation participated of the arts and agriculture. The neceſſity of going every where by water, during the inundation, with the charms of the cool air, and the delightful views of the Nile, habituated the Egyptians to the practice; and might lead us to ſuſpect the firſt veſſels, in which men ventured themſelves on the inconſtant ſea, were built in Egypt. Pleaſure, intereſt, and religion, thoſe powerful motives to action, made them

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through the ſavage ſtates of Greece, prepared them for civilization. Thus the hardy mariners of Europe, ſent by Monarchs, the friends of humanity, reclaim from barbariſm the iſlanders of the South Sea, by communicating our productions and our arts. The ferocious cannibal of New Zealand will ceaſe to devour men, when ſheep, cows, and corn have procured him plenty of food. Agriculture will eſtabliſh ſociety and laws, and they will enjoy the benefits of civilized nations. Their iſlands ſeem not to contain thoſe precious metals which excite avarice; ſlavery, therefore, will not deſtroy, among them, the ſeeds of virtue. Like the Greeks, who deified their firſt benefactors, they will erect monuments to Louis XVI. and George III. Theſe are actions which immortalize kings, and the remembrance of which is never loſt to poſterity. Enlightened by the great men who gained inſtruction in the ſchools of Memphis and Heliopolis, Greece was divided into ſeveral republics, each of which ſmall ſtates endeavoured to obtain ſhipping and trade. Tyre continued to ſend her veſſels over the whole Mediterranean, and kings were adorned by her purple. Pſammeti-

chus

chus (y), the friend of the Greeks, opened the ports of Egypt to them; and Nechos, his ſon, attempted to form a communication between the Nile and the Red Sea; but the great obſtacles he met, and the loſs of a multitude of workmen, occaſioned him to renounce the project. He formed another which proves how far the art of Navigation was carried. He equipped ſhips at Suez, gave the command of them to Phœnician captains (z), and ordered them to coaſt Africa. Theſe able ſeamen left the gulph of Arabia, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, returned northward, and, after three years navigation, arrived at the pillars of Hercules, whence they ſailed for Egypt. This was the firſt time this grand Continent had been coaſted; but the difficulties of a voyage ſo long, when ſhips were obliged never to loſe ſight of ſhore, made them renounce it in future, contenting themſelves to trade in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean. Egypt had then the moſt powerful marine, and was the richeſt country on earth.

Apries, ſon of Nechos, in a naval combat, defeated the united fleets of Cyprus and Tyre,

(y) Herodotus.

(z) Herodot. lib. 4.

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the two moſt famous maritime people.—Emboldened by this ſucceſs, Amaſis ſent a fleet to conquer Cyprus, which taking, he there found abundance of wood, and ſtores, proper for building ſhips. Become maſter of the Mediterranean, that he might ſtrengthen commerce, he called the Greeks into his country, and permitted them to build Naucratis, near the canopic mouth of the Nile: but, to prevent his new allies from becoming too numerous, he obliged their ſhips to unlade only at this city *(a)*, which the eſtabliſhed fairs, and continual arrival of veſſels, rendered very commercial. Temples were erected here at the joint expence of the Ionians, Dorians, and Eolians; but, be their magnificence what it might, they wanted the Egyptian ſolidity; in vain the traveller ſearches for their ruins.

The kingdom was now at the height of proſperity. The arts approached perfection. Aſtronomy calculated eclipſes; Sculpture faſhioned the hardeſt marble at its pleaſure; precious ſtones were engraved; Mechanics raiſed enormous weights; and Chemiſtry ſtained glaſs, gave greater brilliancy to

(*a*) Herodot. lib. 2.

gems (*b*), and dyed with colours that were not to be effaced. Agriculture had enriched this country with the products of India, which it afterward presented to Greece, Italy, and all Europe. And every time we behold bread, white as snow, rice, peas, beans, and various other pulse, we ought to thank the Egyptians, who communicated those precious things to the Greeks, from whom they passed to the Romans, and, afterward, to the Gauls.

When famine raged in neighbouring nations, they, like the sons of Jacob, came to Memphis for food. Such were the advantages, in part, due to the commerce of the Pharaohs, who sent their fleets from the island of Taprobana, now Ceylon, to the ports of Spain. The polished people of Africa and Europe from them received articles of utility, luxury, and pleasure; and to the benefits of trade must we, in part, attribute the admirable works of which they are the authors. Never did nation possess such treasures, cultivate arts and sciences with greater ardor, or raise monuments so stately. The stuffs of Bengal, the gold dust which rolls in

(*b*) Plin. Hist. Nat.

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the torrents of Ethiopia, the pearls of Ormuz, were brought to Memphis, become the moſt commercial city on earth.

Such was the flouriſhing ſtate of Egypt when invaded by Cambyſes with innumerable hoſts. Amaſis, imprudently, diſguſted the native military, by preferring Grecian troops, and a hundred and fifty thouſand men abandoned their country; by which deſertion this fine kingdom, ceding to the Perſian, was ravaged with fire and ſword. Intoxicated with victory, the ferocious conqueror deſtroyed the academies, and left barbarian marks on the monuments, which ſtill remain. After the loſs of armies, in mad expeditions againſt the temple of Jupiter Ammon, and the Ethiopians, he left troops in Egypt, and returned to his kingdom. Commerce ſuffered from theſe exceſſes, but the impulſe had been given, and, though ſhackled, it ſtill continued its courſe. Darius, ſon of Hyſtaſpes, who knew its worth, reſtored its former vigour, and favoured it throughout his empire; he even wiſhed to continue the canal Nechos had begun, and only receded from the falſe opinion given him that the Red Sea was higher than the Mediterranean, and would overflow Egypt.

Egypt. Scylax, by his command, deſcended the river Indus, examined the coaſts of a part of Aſia, eaſt and weſt, and, after two years navigation, returned to the iſthmus of Suez. The information he obtained determined the Perſian king to invade India, where he made great conqueſts, by which the Egyptians profited, in extending their trade, repairing their loſſes, and re-eſtabliſhing their marine. Subſervient to the ambition of this prince againſt the Greeks *(c)*, they ſupplied his army with proviſions, aſſiſted him in building the memorable bridge over the Boſphorus, and, in the ſea fight off the iſland Eubæa, ſeized five of the enemy's ſhips. Their valour and abilities as mariners were conſpicuous in the battles of Salamis and Mycale; but the love of liberty, inflaming the republics of Sparta and Athens, and the great men they produced, defeated the efforts of Aſia and Africa, conſpiring their ruin.

The next age produced a Prince of an impetuous character and ſuperior genius, who, by combating the Greeks, learned to conquer the world. Become King, he departed, at

(*c*) Herodot. lib. 4.

the head of forty thouſand men, overthrew the Satraps of Aſia minor, vanquiſhed the proud Tyre, who had refuſed him for a maſter, and turned his arms againſt Egypt, which impatiently ſupported the Perſian yoke, and, half way meeting Alexander, was conquered without a battle. Charmed with the reception he met from the Egyptians, and intoxicated by flattering hopes from the oracle of Ammon *(d)*, he left them the ſame form of government, and the ſame religion. With a mind enlarged by the education a philoſopher beſtowed, and with views of univerſal empire, this prince wiſhed not, in conquering, to deſtroy the world. To make his power ſure in Egypt, the importance of which he knew, he founded a great city, with three harbours capable of containing the fleets of Greece, and the merchandize of all nations. He himſelf traced the plan of commerce which was to unite the ſcattered members of his vaſt ſtates; but he was cut off in the flower of his age, and paſt over the earth like a torrent. His generals, dividing his ſpoils, became mighty monarchs. Ptolemy, ſon of Lagus, obtaining Egypt, endeavoured

(*d*) Quintus Curtius.

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to execute the grand deſigns of his maſter, invited the merchants of Syria and Greece to Alexander, and, by conſtantly protecting them, rendered his kingdom flouriſhing, which gave him the means of advantageouſly facing his foes, and conquering the iſle of Cyprus. The Rhodians, his faithful allies, refuſing to unite their fleets with thoſe of Antigonus to attack Ptolemy, were beſieged by Demetrius Poliorcetes; but, by the great ſuccors they received, in corn and naval ſtores, from Ptolemy, they triumphed over this formidable warrior, and their gratitude beſtowed the name of Soter, ſaviour, on their defender.

Amid the tumults of war, this firſt of the Ptolemies was zealous for the proſperity of his new kingdom. The low coaſts of Egypt made the ſhores very dangerous, on which veſſels often were wrecked before they were ſeen; he, therefore, built that ſtately tower on the iſle of Pharos, which overlooks the ocean, and on which was inſcribed, in large characters, TO THE PROTECTING GODS FOR THE BENEFIT OF NAVIGATORS. The white marble made it viſible by day-light, and it was lighted at night to direct the courſe of ſhips. All antiquity has praiſed

this magnificent work. Thus the French ſhall bleſs the memory of a protecting king, who formed a mighty haven, amidſt the waves; and, hereafter, beholding ſquadrons in ſafety, ſecured by piers which an engineer of genius has marvellouſly conſtructed at Cherbourg, poſterity ſhall ſay, here Louis XVI. enchained the waves of the ſea.

The havens of Alexandria, ſituated to the weſt, north, and ſouth, received the merchandize of the whole world, and the city became, as Strabo calls it, the greateſt emporium on earth. Ptolemy did more, he eſtabliſhed an academy, whoſe learned members went, by his command, to examine the various countries of the earth, their riches and productions. Thus, in the preſent age, have the French monarchs, imitating his example, ſent academicians from the pole to the equator to meaſure the globe, and obtain knowledge beneficial to geography and navigation. The ſon of Lagus, though involved in war with the Kings of Syria, collected thoſe manuſcripts, from all parts, which compoſed the famous library the fate of which we weep: his monuments have been eraſed, but his glory ſhall never periſh;

for, while he drove the ſoe from his dominions, he laboured for the happineſs of his ſubjects.

Ptolemy Philadelphus followed his father's ſteps, and rendered Egypt powerful and happy. The pomp he diſplayed at coming to the crown proves the extenſive commerce of the kingdom. It is circumſtantially deſcribed by Athenæus: I muſt be more conciſe. The products of all climates were here aſſembled. Female ſlaves of Aſia and Africa, in the habits of their country, began the proceſſion; camels loaded with incenſe, ſaffron, cinnamon, and precious aromatics, followed; a body of Ethiopians bore ebony wood, and four hundred elephants teeth; Abyſſinians were loaded with gold duſt, collected on the banks of their torrents; Indians diſplayed to the people the riches, pearls, and diamonds, their kingdoms produced; numbers of wild beaſts were led by their keepers; the beauteous birds of Africa, the ſheep of Abyſſinia, Yemen, and Greece, the milk white oxen of India, the bears of the north, leopards, panthers, lynxes, the camelopard, and the rhinoceros, followed in the train. Objects ſo various could only

have been found among a people who traded to all nations.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, better informed, or more fortunate, than Nechos and Darius, continued the canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, which work he had the glory to atchieve. It began at the peluſiac branch, and was carried to Arſinoe, now Aggerout *(e)*. Locks, conſtructed at its mouth, prevented a too haſty ſtream; and there were lakes, which ſupplied it, where boats might ſtop. Hiſtory does not inform us how far this canal was advantageous to commerce; but, as it was neceſſary to ſail quite up the Arabian gulph, the far end of which is narrow and moſt dangerous, to come to it, Ptolemy opened another route for merchants, by founding a town which, after his mother, he named Berenice, on the ſhore of the Red Sea, in the latitude of Syene. From Cophtos to Berenice he conſtructed ciſterns, and inns, where caravans might find refreſhments amid the deſerts. It was twelve days journey acroſs burning ſands, and Berenice was an

(*e*) Aggerout is now two leagues from the port of Suez. Thus far the ſea has retired ſince Ptolemy.

open

open ſhore, expoſed to all winds, which inconvenience occaſioned mariners to prefer the port of the Rat, now Coſſeir, where they found good anchorage; ſince when the trade of India has followed the road I before deſcribed.

The Ptolemies kept up a formidable marine, in the Red Sea and Mediterranean, to protect the Egyptian merchants. Theocritus *(f)* affirms they had ninety-ſeven firſt-rate ſhips, ſeveral of which were two hundred feet long, beſide a multitude of ſmall veſſels, and four thouſand barks to bear orders throughout the empire. By ſuch means, Ptolemy Philadelphus extended his conqueſts far into Ethiophia, and Yemen, and reigned over thirty-three thouſand cities. Theſe facts would appear incredible, were they not atteſted by writers of good authority, and did we not know to what a degree of ſplendor commerce might raiſe a ſtate, and the infinite reſources an enlightened king might find, in the ſituation of Egypt, bordering on two ſeas, and enjoying the treaſures of an inexhauſtible ſoil.

(f) Theocrit. Idyl. 17.

Following the example of his predeceſſors, Ptolemy Evergetes founded his power on trade, to which he gave every encouragement, maintained the marine of the Red Sea, ſubjugated ſeveral of the kings of the Homeritæ, who reigned in Arabia Felix, commanded them to guard the high roads, and effectually protected caravans from the Arabs. The wealth of Egypt was at its utmoſt under his reign, and the abundance of gold and riches of all kinds were productive of exceſſive luxury in Alexandria, and corrupted the court of its kings. Moſt men are virtuous in mediocrity: misfortune elevates the mind and imparts energy, but exceſſive proſperity enervates; and, by opening the flood-gates of vice, ſhuts thoſe of happineſs.

The Ptolemies, enjoying ſupreme power, abandoned themſelves to effeminacy, irreſolution, and diſorders which infected the morals of their ſubjects; for the corruption of kingdoms always begins with the great. The fourth of theſe princes, however, performed ſome good acts. At the entreaty of the Rhodians, he gave liberty to Andromachus, father of Achæus, ſovereign of a part of Aſia Minor, who had allied himſelf to the Byzantines

zantines to exact tribute from all ſhips paſſing the ſtrait of the Helleſpont. In return for this benefit, Achæus renounced his allies, and they their pretenſions, and commerce, again unfettered, continued its uſual courſe. He, alſo, kept up, and augmented, the marine his anceſtors had created. Under his reign were veſſels of a ſize ſo enormous that they have never ſince been equalled. Plutarch *(g)* deſcribes one of his veſſels with forty benches of rowers, three hundred and ſeventy-three feet long, and ſixty-four high at the poop. This enormous ſhip, beſide which our three-deckers would ſeem ſmall frigates, contained four hundred ſailors to work her, four thouſand rowers, and about three thouſand fighting men. The arts of ſhip building and navigation muſt have been brought to great perfection among the Egyptians, who could build and work ſuch immenſe veſſels, that reſembled floating towns. The reigns of the ſucceeding Ptolemies preſent exceſs of luxury in the capital, and kings indulging in licentiouſneſs; yet theſe very facts demonſtrate the treaſures of com-

(*g*) Plutarch in Demetrio.

merce,

merce, ſince, amidſt unbounded expence, the country was rich and flouriſhing. At ſome moments, abſorbed as they were in pleaſure, they thought of its welfare. Ptolemy Phyſcon ſent Eudoxus, the Cyzicenian, ambaſſador, to various potentates of India, and the accounts this celebrated navigator brought added to the knowledge they had of thoſe countries, and encreaſed the avidity of merchants, who undertook new expeditions to the Eaſt, and penetrated the Ganges as far as Bengal. After the king's death, his widow, Cleopatra, commanded Eudoxus to viſit the nations at the extremity of Africa; and, ſailing from the Red Sea, he arrived on the coaſt of Sofala. Finding the prow of a ſhip, he knew to be from Cadiz, on the ſhore, he formed the project of coaſting this great continent. Returning to Egypt, he found Ptolemy Lathyrus on the throne, who did not love him, and attempted his meditated enterprize. Paſſing the ſtraits of Babelmandel, he doubled the cape, and landed at the pillars of Hercules. This was the ſecond time a voyage ſo daring had been performed. It is eaſy to judge how difficult was the enterprize, how able and intrepid the

the mariners muſt be, and what obſtacles and perils he was expoſed to, in times when the compaſs directed not his courſe. It is eaſier, at preſent, to ſail round the world.

The merchants of Alexandria, under Ptolemy IX. continued to navigate the Euxine, the Mediterranean, the Perſian Gulph, and to the fartheſt Ind. Not to the good adminiſtration of the Egyptian monarchs was this extenſive commerce indebted, but to laſting eſtabliſhments; and, when not impeded, to the routine that long had been traced.

During the Alexandrian war, which Ptolemy XII. ſuſtained againſt Cæſar, the latter burnt a hundred and ten large ſhips, and the Egyptians ſtill had reſources enabling them to equip a fleet, capable of facing the enemy. But who could withſtand the genius of Cæſar! The efforts of the Alexandrians were inſufficient, oppoſed to the conqueror of the Gauls. To a woman the glory of triumphing over this great man was reſerved. Cleopatra ſubjected the conqueror, by charms irreſiſtible. During the courſe of her life, this queen diſplayed magnificence and prodigality of which hiſtory contains not a fe-

cond

cond example. Cited by Antony *(b)*, then at Tarſus in Cilicia, to render an account of her conduct, ſhe went to meet the Roman General. Paſſing the Mediterranean, ſhe ſailed up the Cydnus, in a veſſel the deſcription of which reſembles what the poets give us of the ſhell of Venus. The ſails were purple, the prow and ſides of glittering gold, and the oars, which kept time with the muſic, were plated with ſilver. The Queen, reclining under a canopy, enriched with gold and ineſtimable gems, correſponded, in dreſs, to the ſplendor of her ſhip. The richeſt robes, bedecked with pearls and diamonds, veiled, but did not conceal, her charms. Like the Cytherean goddeſs, round her were numerous children, habited like cupids, agitating the air this new deity breathed; while clouding perfumes, inceſſantly burnt, were wafted to the ſhores. Antony, intending to puniſh Cleopatra, ſoon felt the power of her beauty; and, forgetting the judge, became the lover. Yet not to beauty alone was the Egyptian Queen indebted for victory. She had wit, and a cultivated underſtanding;

(*b*) Plut. in Antonio.

knew

knew the Oriental languages; ſpoke the Greek, Ethiopic, Hebrew, Parthian, Syriac, and Perſian, and converſed, in their own idioms, with the various foreigners who inceſſantly came to the port of Alexandria, that, after the fall of Carthage and Corinth, was become the emporium of the world *(i)*, and contained three hundred thouſand free people, with, at leaſt, double the number of ſlaves.

Cleopatra had vanquiſhed Cæſar and Antony, but in vain attempted Auguſtus, a cold and artful man; and, fearing to be led in triumph by this pompous conqueror, ſhe killed herſelf. Egypt was then governed by the Romans, and was to Rome what Peru has been to Spain, and Bengal is to England: ſupplying Italy with gold and ſilver in ſuch abundance that proviſions, merchandize, and lands, were doubled in value; thus haſtening the ruin of the empire.

Robbed of their monarchs, and ſubject to the Romans, the Egyptians became their factors; the former ardently undertaking the commerce of India, the product of which, according to Pliny, was a hundredfold, and,

(*i*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

purſuing

purſuing the ſteps of their predeceſſors, ſome, entering the Indus, penetrated up the country; others, landing at the iſle of Ceylon, and others, doubling cape Comorin, proceeded up the Ganges as far as Palibothra *(k)*, a mighty city, to which the Egyptians long had traded, and where was a vaſt concourſe of Oriental nations. They brought back cotton-cloths, and ſilks, which Auguſtus firſt wore, after whom the Romans, ſtudying luxury, imagined perfumes, pearls, and diamonds, real wants: now that the mulberry tree and ſilkworm are tranſplanted into Europe, ſtuffs, unknown to the Roman Conſuls, are worn by men of all conditions. They have not yet, however, acquired the excellence of thoſe of Bengal, or the durability of their colours; perhaps the ſmall Indian colony, ſettled in France by an Admiral whoſe talents, virtues, and victories, honour his country, may diſcloſe the ſecrets of the Eaſt to the French manufacturers.

In proportion as the Romans narrowed the limits of their empire, they adopted the

(k) Strabo, lib. 15.

vices

vices and cuſtoms of the conquered people. Egypt was the kingdom that influenced their manners moſt, becauſe it procured them moſt wealth. Fine linnen, and cotton-cloths, made at Alexandria, ſuperb carpets, and variegated chryſtals, were tranſported to Rome; while the abundant productions of the Thebais ſupplied the proud city with proviſions. After this ſhe had neither manufactures nor agriculture, and, in a few years, was ſurrounded by immenſe parks, and vaſt gardens; on the ſpots dictators had ploughed, where they had inhabited their ruſtic manſions, delicious groves, caſcades, parterres, and palaces were beheld. Aſiatic effeminacy enervated the proud republicans. In vain did the wiſeſt of their Emperors endeavour to reſiſt the torrent; the maſters of the world had taſted the charms of indolence; nations paid them tribute, Egypt gave them corn, and they imagined they had only to receive the labours of the conquered, and the earth's homage. Its expiring ray extinguiſhed by Auguſtus, freedom gave place to ſlavery, and all its conſequent vices. The Romans became leſs deſirous of commanding than of enjoying feſtivals, and ſhows. The thirſt of gold

gold compleated corruption; all was venality at Rome; ſoldiers and armies were bought, and the pretorian bands ſet the empire to ſale.

To Byzantium Conſtantine tranſported the ſeat of empire, which ſoon became divided, and its deſtruction followed. The weſtern fell firſt, becauſe it wanted that wealth which agriculture and morality give, and which impart ſtability to kingdoms. Italy was a garden, and its inhabitants, ſunk in luxury, could not reſiſt the multitudinous barbarians. Egypt long was the ſupport of the tottering throne of Conſtantinople, and, ſpite of the rigors ſome of the emperors exerciſed over it, or of that deſtructive monopoly which is too often ſtill renewed in great cities, it continued to be enriched by commerce, and furniſhed its ſovereigns with reſources againſt their numerous enemies. Cous, poſſeſſing the trade of India, flouriſhed ſeveral ages, and became the rival of Alexandria. Its ſhips forgot not the way to Bengal, but brought the merchandize moſt in requeſt. The time, however, approached when the glory of Egypt, together with commerce, agriculture, and arts, was to decline.

Mahomet,

Mahomet, poſſeſſed of a genius equal to revolutions ſo vaſt, created a religion for the nations of Arabia, ſcattered over the deſerts, which was to arm them againſt the whole world. Emboldened by ſucceſs, he ſent ambaſſadors to the Emperors of Perſia, Conſtantinople, Abyſſinia, and the governor of Memphis, to invite them to embrace Iſlamiſm, or pay him tribute. Hiſtory affords not another inſtance of a miſſion ſo audacious, and he muſt have been thought a madman, had not his genius ſupplied him with the means of maintaining an attempt thus daring. Travelling had taught him the feebleneſs of neighbouring nations, and he knew warriors educated in his ſchool might undertake, and execute, all things. The Greeks having aſſaſſinated one of his ambaſſadors, he armed three thouſand men; which handful of ſoldiers, having traverſed Arabia Deſerta, where three generals appointed by the prophet periſhed, Khaled put himſelf at the head of the Arabs, and, by prodigies of valour, vanquiſhed a hundred thouſand Greeks. Thus encouraged, Mahomet departed, with thirty thouſand men, and ſubjected the country as far as the frontiers of Syria. Death cut ſhort

his exploits, but his ſucceſſors, animated by his example, and heated by the enthuſiaſm he had communicated, overthrew neighbouring nations, and conquered Egypt, and a part of the Eaſt.

Become a province, under the Califs, Egypt gradually loſt its commerce and arts. The ferocious Amrou having burnt the magnificent library, collected by the Ptolemies, the learned fled to Conſtantinople and the Grecian Iſles. The zeal of the firſt Mahometans not permitting them to hold alliance with Chriſtian princes, they neglected the trade of the Mediterranean, and confined themſelves to that of the Red Sea, and inland commerce. Agriculture ſtill flouriſhed; ſome of the Arab princes encouraged the ſciences; and, at length, the Venetians gained admiſſion into their ports, eſtabliſhed conſuls, and, obtaining leave to ſettle up the country, carried on the trade of India under the protection of the Egyptians: hence they derived vaſt advantages, and became the firſt mariners of Europe, which they ſupplied with all the productions of Aſia and Africa. For ſome time, the Genoeſe partook theſe benefits; but the Venetian marine, rapidly increaſing,

reigned

reigned triumphant, in the Mediterranean. Daring from ſucceſs, they profited by the ruin of the Greeks to deprive the Ottomans of ſome ſcattered parts of their empire. Having ſeized the Morea, Candia, and ſeveral iſlands in the Archipelago, they ſent their ſquadrons to the Dardanelles, and humbled Mahometan pride. They and their allies vanquiſhed the whole naval power of the Turks, at the battle of Lepanto. Enriched by the commerce of the Red Sea and India, this republic ſaved Italy, and, for two centuries, was the bulwark of Chriſtendom.

Venice was at the height of her proſperity when a valourous nation, excited by a prince learned in Geography and Aſtronomy, endeavoured to find a new paſſage to the Indies. Henry, brother of the King of Portugal, taught by Hiſtory, knew Africa might be coaſted; and, fitting out ſeveral veſſels, aſſiſted by the compaſs, diſcovered the Azore and Canary Iſlands. One of his captains proceeded to the cape that terminates Africa; being aſſailed by furious winds, he named it the tempeſtuous cape, and returned; but the prince changed the name to that of Good Hope. Theſe attempts, long fruitleſs, muſt

give us a high idea of Egyptian navigation, ſince they, twice, had performed the taſk, without any guide, except the ſtars and their own genius. Vaſco de Gama, a Portugueſe gentleman, at length, had the glory of doubling this famous cape; and, after landing on the coaſt of Malabar, returned triumphant to Liſbon. The precious ſtones he brought, and the pompous account he gave of the treaſures of the Indian kings, enflamed the Portugueſe; who, in a few years, conquered Cochin, Goa, and many other cities, whence they obtained immenſe riches.

Egypt was taken from the Arabs by the Turks, who, incited, and ſupplied with materials and wood for ſhip-building, by the Venetians, fitted out a fleet on the Red Sea, and endeavoured to ſtop the Portugueze conqueſts, and drive them from their new eſtabliſhments. Albuquerque, their governor, fought, glorioufly, againſt the Turkiſh fleet, entered the Arabian gulph, took ſeveral ports, and determined to cruſh Egypt. Having made a treaty with the emperor of Abyſſinia, he engaged to turn the courſe of the Nile into the Red Sea. What horrors will not ambition impel men to commit! To

inſure the excluſive commerce of India to his nation, this admiral would not have ſcrupled to deſtroy four millions of ſouls, and reduce a kingdom to a deſert. His letters lead us to believe the thing was practicable; but, happily for the Egyptians, death relieved them from the aſpiring Albuquerque, and the emperor of Abyſſinia dropped the infamous project.

While the Portugueſe contended for the wealth of the Eaſt with Venetians and Egyptians, the Spaniards, led on by Columbus, had diſcovered America, and the new world was ſoon inſufficient for their cupidity. The Liſbon mariners, following the track of Vaſco de Gama, touched at the coaſt of Malabar, and proceeded to the Indian Archipelago; and the men of Cadiz went to the Moluccas. Theſe rival people, ſailing nearly at the ſame time, and each traverſing half the circumference of the globe, on its oppoſite ſides, met in the middle. They divided the ſpoil, not without ſtaining the land with their blood, and that of the wretched inhabitants of Celebes, whom, after reducing to ſlavery, they were equally eager to plunder. The aromatics, ſpices,

gold and diamonds, with which they returned loaded, roused the courts of Europe from their lethargy, who had treated the grand projects of the immortal Columbus as dreams. England and France built ships, desirous to partake of these new discoveries. Hence we may date the decline of Venice, the foundation of whose power was the trade of Egypt and India, and the loss of which reduced her to all her former insignificance. The ruin of her marine followed that of her commerce, and prevented her from defending her distant provinces. The Turks took the Morea, Candia, and the islands she possessed in the Archipelago, and she now has only a rock or two, which the Porte has left her, because they are useless.

The maritime powers of Europe, at present, found their prosperity on commerce; and each is desirous the balance should be in its favour. Russia, too far north to send fleets to India, by the Cape of Good Hope, and enter in competition with nations more happily situated, has opened a route, known to the Romans and Genoese, sending her ships by the Volga to the Caspian Sea; and

her

her merchants endeavour to obtain the products of Perſia, and the northern provinces of the Mogul. Already they trade in the rich ſilks of Ghilan; and Catherine II. will, no doubt, invade theſe wealthy territories, the firſt opportunity. England, France, and Holland, ſupply Europe with the products of India; eſpecially the firſt, which, in Bengal, has formed a kingdom of vaſt extent, and, become miſtreſs of this trade, diſputes the glory of navigation with the whole earth.

In her preſent ſtate, Egypt, without arts or ſhipping, and groaning under the tyranny of her Beys, cannot profit by her ſituation to rival the Europeans. Her ignorant mariners, far from navigating the Indian, ſcarcely dare venture over the Red Sea; their greateſt effort is their annual voyage to Moka, where their ill-armed ſaicks, incapable of defence, are laden with the coffee of Yemen, the muſlins and cloths of Bengal, brought them by the Banyans, the perfumes of Arabia, and the pearls of the iſles of Beharim. The coffee they buy for four-pence per pound, at Moka, they ſell for fifteen-pence, at Cairo; and this article, alone,

amounts to half a million ſterling. Moſt of it is ſent to Conſtantinople, Greece, Marſeilles, and the coaſt of Syria; the reſt they conſume themſelves.

The Engliſh attempted to rob them of this trade, but the Egyptians complained to government, and the former were powerfully oppoſed. Ali Bey having given ſafety to the caravans, and opened the ports of Egypt to foreigners, ſome Engliſh ſhips came to Suez, loaded with the ſtuffs of Bengal, for which they found a ready ſale; but political views have prohibited this traffic, and it is poſſeſſed by the Egyptians. Yet what could they effect againſt the ſquadrons of Europe? Soon or late, they muſt ſubmit to receive, from ſtrangers, the precious merchandize they dearly obtain from Moka, which will be ſupplied at a much cheaper rate; nay, foreigners might find means to obtain permiſſion to carry on this trade.

Egypt, even in decline, might appear reſpectable among powerful nations, becauſe ſhe contains, within herſelf, the true ſource of wealth. Her corn, with which ſhe ſupplies Arabia, Syria, and a part of the Archipelago, her rice, ſent over the Mediterranean

ranean as far as Marſeilles, her carthamus flowers, with which the people of Provence annually load ſeveral ſhips, her ſal-ammoniac, tranſported through all Egypt, her abundant ſouda, her excellent flax, eſteemed by the Italians, her blue cloths, that cloath in part the neighbouring nations, all are objects that will make the balance of trade in her favour. The Abyſſinians bring her gold duſt, elephants teeth, and other precious commodities, which they exchange for her productions. The cloths, lead, arms, and ſome gold lace from Lyons, which French ſhips bring, do not equal what they receive; they pay the balance in Turkiſh piaſtres. The copper kitchen furniture, and furs, which the Turks ſend to Alexandria, are far below the amount of the corn, rice, lentils, coffee, and perfumes they take back; moſt of which are paid for in ready money. Except Moka and Mecca, where the Egyptians annually leave a great part of their ſequins, all who trade with them bring them ſilver and gold. So plentiful are theſe metals that Ali Bey, flying to Syria, carried with him three million and a half ſterling; and Iſmael Bey, eſcaping, ſome years

years after, loaded fifty camels with ſequins, pataças *(k)*, pearls, and jewellery.

If, deſtitute of ſhipping and manufactures, and reduced to the ſole advantages of its ſoil, Egypt is ſtill ſo wealthy, imagine, Sir, what ſhe might be, governed by an enlightened people. What cloths might be fabricated from her fine wool, what linen from her flax, what muſlins from the two ſpecies of cotton ſhe produces, the one annual the other perennial; what ſilks from the worm, which, here, if introduced, would thrive ſo well in a climate that has neither rain nor tempeſts; what an influx of proſperity from opening her canals, repairing her mounds, and reſtoring to agriculture a third of the grounds buried under the ſands; what wealth from opening her mines of emeralds, famous for almoſt equalling the diamond in duration; and from the granite, the porphyry, and the alabaſter, which many of her mountains contain! With what utility might her indigo, carthamus, and other ſubſtances, excellent for dying, ſcattered through her deſerts, be employed! Theſe, Sir, are not

(*k*) A ſilver coin, worth five ſhillings.

chimerical

chimerical riches; Egypt has poſſeſſed them for ages: and a wiſe adminiſtration would reſtore all the prolific treaſures of nature.

Thus, Sir, have I given an abſtract of the viciſſitudes of commerce, from the remoteſt to the preſent times; and the ſplendor it once enjoyed muſt impreſs the mind wirh vaſt ideas of what it might become.

I have the honor to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

ON THE ANCIENT WORSHIP OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND, PARTICULARLY, ON ATHOR, ONE OF THEIR DEITIES.

Athor, or Night, according to the Egyptian prieſts, was the ſymbol of the darkneſs of Chaos, before the creation, of which, animated by the breath of the Almighty, the world was formed. They afterwards held the moon to be a type of this darkneſs, and introduced its worſhip. This idea they ſtill farther extended to winter and ſummer.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

RELIGION and Man were born together; he, placed on a globe where experience daily taught him his own feebleneſs, ſought protectors from ſurrounding dangers; and ſhe was the daughter of want and gratitude. Before he was bleſſed by revelation, objects which aſtoniſhed, from which he received

ceived the greateſt benefits, or dreaded moſt, by turns, attracted veneration. To rivers, ſeas, ſtorms, and the ſun, he addreſſed his prayers, and erected his altars. The leſs he knew of the phænomena of nature, the more he believed in hidden powers. All nations have adored, under different names, inviſible ſpirits, either praying for protection, or deprecating wrath. Men enlightened by ſublime philoſophy, only, can behold him who preſides over the univerſe, or ſuppoſe a plurality of Gods abſurd. Yet am I perſuaded writers, either prejudiced or ſuperficial, have calumniated nations; by pretending they worſhip inſenſible ſtone, or deſpicable animals. The ſculptured marble and the conſecrated ox were but emblems of the deities they adored; as the ſtatues, and images, in our temples, are but the ſymbols of ſaints, or God. Since the iſlanders of Otaheite, where civilization ſcarcely has begun, regard the bananas, and animals, within their Morais, but as offerings to their Eatooa *(l)*, why ſhould we inſiſt that the Egyptians wor-

(*l*) Inviſible deities. *Cook's Voyage.*

ſhipped

ſhipped the onion and the crocodile *(m)*? No rational man can entertain an opinion ſo unfounded. Could the people called the wiſe, who cultivated ſcience ſo ſucceſsfully, among whom Solon learned thoſe laws he gave the Athenians, and Plato the immortality of the ſoul, adopt a worſhip ſo abſurd? No, Sir, the philoſophers of Egypt never deified animals; nor did they ever, like the Greeks, raiſe heroes to the rank of gods. Aſtronomy and the phænomena of nature were the foundation of religion; they placed an inviſible ſpirit above the ſtars, to whom they imputed the wondrous harmony of the univerſe. The vulgar, indeed, whoſe feeble ſight beheld objects only, often adored the ſymbol, inſtead of the deity. I will endeavour to elucidate their religious doctrines, which the learned Jablonſki has ſo well done before me; and, following his footſteps, add citations from the beſt authors of antiquity; for, in a matter ſo important,

(m) Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus, Ælian, all mention the holy animals of Egypt, but no where call them Gods, holding them, on the contrary, to be living types of the deities to which they were conſecrated.

we muſt leave nothing to fancy, conjecture, or chance.

One of the moſt antient of the Egyptian deities was Athor; which, in the Coptic, ſignifies Night *(n)*. The prieſts, by this word, did not mean that privation of light which ſucceeds ſun-ſet; but the darkneſs of Chaos, before creation; of which, animating it by his breath, God made all creatures. In their opinion, this myſterious night was the origin of things. Damaſius *(o)*, ſpeaking of antient Egyptian Theology, ſays, "they "held Darkneſs to be the firſt principle, "which human reaſon might not compre-"hend, and which they thrice celebrated "in their ſacred hymns." Sanchoniathon, embued with this doctrine, ſays, "from the "wind Kolpia, and his wife Baaou, were "mortals created *(p)*." Kolpia is a Hebrew word, which ſignifies the breath of God; and Baaou the void. Thus the Creator's voice called being from non-entity; and this Theology differs little from that of Geneſis, which ſays, "And the earth was without

(*n*) Jablonſki. Pantheon Ægyptiacum. Tom. I.
(*o*) As cited by Cudworth.
(*p*) Jablonſki, tom. I.

"form

" form and void, and darkneſs was upon the " face of the deep, and the ſpirit of God moved " (brooded) upon the face of the waters *(q)*." Simplicius *(r)* pretends, " that the words, " and God called the light day, and the " darkneſs night, were taken from Egyptian " fables." But, granting Moſes to have learned this doctrine from the prieſts of Memphis, having freed it from the abſurdities in which it was enveloped, it is not the leſs divine. This antient people, deſcendants of Miſraim, grandſon of Noah, might, like the Iſraelites, have received the light of Revelation from their common father; and, if they have obſcured its pure flame, the leader of the Hebrews has reſtored its luſtre.

Orpheus, initiated in the Egyptian myſteries, firſt brought their religious opinions into Greece, and ſung them in harmonious verſe. " In the beginning," ſays he, " Ether " was created by God, and from his boſom " came Chaos, and dark Night, which " ſpread over all below Ether." In the dialogue between Jupiter and Night, the poet, aſſuming his right, perſonifies the lat-

(q) Geneſis, I. 2.

(r) Comment. in Ariſtotel. Phyſic. lib. 8.

ter,

ter, and makes the Creator thus ſpeak *(s)*. "Nurſe of the Gods, immortal Night—— "How muſt I wiſely proceed in creating the "immortal Gods? How form the Univerſe "into one whole, where each thing ſhall ſepa- "rately exiſt?" Night replies, "Encompaſs "Creation with the immenſe Ether; place "the Heavens in the centre; and under the "Heavens the earth, ſurrounded by the ſea, "and crowned by the ſtars."

The Greeks eagerly received the religion Orpheus ſung, glowing with the primitive ideas which the antient Egyptians entertained on the origin of things. Philoſophers ſpread a veil over it, impenetrable to the vulgar; and poets, perſonifying the elements, compoſed a fabulous Theogony. Thus enveloped, thus concealed, it was difficult to perceive truth. The religious opinions of Egypt long were preſerved in the temples of Greece. Pauſanias, viſiting the country, ſaw, at Megara, *the Oracle of Night*; and, in the temple of Diana, at Epheſus, *the Sanctuary of Night*; where, probably, all that related to Athor was taught.

(s) Vide Eſchenbach.

This ſymbolical Deity, by which the Egyptians repreſented the paſſive principle of things, became, in the language of the Greek philoſophers, Venus, or the mother of the world. Orpheus, likewiſe, taught them this allegory *(t)*. "Night, the mother "of Gods and men, I ſing. Night, the "origin of all created beings, by us named "Venus." The poets purſued this metaphyſical idea, and, wanting a deity that might embelliſh their ſongs, they derived her from the foam of the ſea; firſt in Beauty, and Goddeſs of Pleaſure, ſhe animated the world, ſhe gave life to all. Ovid celebrates her power in theſe allegorical verſes *(u)*.

Illa quidem totum digniſſima temperat orbem:
Illa tenet nullo regna minora Deo:
Juraque dat cælo, terræ, natalibus undis;
Perque ſuos initus continet omne genus.
Illa Deos omnes (longum enumerare) creavit:
Illa ſatis cauſſas arboribuſque dedit.

The Egyptian prieſts, deſcribing Night as the Deity from whoſe boſom the Eternal had drawn all creatures, knowing the vulgar

(*t*) Jablonſki, tom. I.
(*u*) Ovid. Faſt. lib. 4.

muſt

muſt have ſenſible objects, led them to adore the Moon, reigning in darkneſs. They, no doubt, at firſt, held this planet to be but an emblem of Night, and divine power; but, as the ſymbol often obſcures the Deity, the people prayed to the Moon, and to her erected their altars.

Philoſophers ſtill underſtood the doctrine; and, by Night, Athor, and Venus, meant that ſeaſon when the ſun, having paſſed the equator, remains in the auſtral hemiſphere; the days then being ſhorter, and the nights longer. "Philoſophers (x) have honoured "the upper hemiſphere with the name of "Venus, and the lower with that of Proſer- "pine. The Aſſyrians and Phœnicians repre- "ſent this goddeſs in tears, becauſe the ſun, "paſſing through the ſigns of the Zodiac, "enters the auſtral hemiſphere, where, ſo long "as he remains, the days are ſhorter, and "Venus is feigned to weep the abſence of the "god, dead for a time, and detained by Pro- "ſerpine. Her ſtatue is on Mount Lebanon "(the celebrated Venus Aphacitis) veiled, and "with a ſorrowful countenance. The ſtatue,

(x) Macrob. lib. I. cap. 21.

" beſide repreſenting the grief of the goddeſs, " is alſo the ſymbol of Winter."

The following paſſage demonſtrates this opinion came from Egypt *(y)*. " In the " month of Athyr *(z)* the Egyptians ſay " Oſiris (the ſun) is dead; nights then are " longer, darkneſs increaſes, and his power " is diminiſhed. The prieſts perform gloomy " ceremonies, and ſhew the people a gilded " ox, covered with a black veil (or pall) ſig- " nifying the grief of the goddeſs Iſis, or the " Moon." In Egypt, the ox is a ſymbol of Oſiris, and the earth.

Thus, the Egyptian Athor firſt ſignified that myſterious Night which was over chaos, before the creation; afterward the Moon; and, laſtly, Winter; by this analogy, the Orientals, Greeks and Romans, have named Athor Venus the Queen of the World, and the Mother of Delights. The doctrine is the ſame, though its form be changed; paſſing from one nation to another, and from the lips of philoſophers to poets.

(y) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

(z) Athyr, the name of a month. The Egyptians call Venus, Athor, after whom they name the third month of their year. Orion the grammarian.

Temples

Temples were dedicated to Athor, in Egypt. Herodotus, who gives the names of many remarkable places there, mentions Athar-Beki, the city of Athor, which Strabo *(a)*, and Diodorus Siculus *(b)*, tranſlate Aphroditopolis; the city of Venus. Ælian *(c)*, ſpeaking of a town in the Hermopolitan Nomos, ſays, "Here they worſhip "Venus, and pay peculiar adoration to the "cow." The ſame author informs us Iſis, or the Moon, was repreſented with the horns of a cow. Thus this animal was the emblem of the Moon; and the black veil, with which it was covered during winter, could only ſignify to the people the decreaſe of day, and the grief of Iſis; though, certainly, to the prieſts, it meant the darkneſs of chaos before creation. In the map of Egypt, you will find three towns, which the Greek geographers have named Aphroditopolis, but which the natives call Athar-Beki.

Such is the ſmall information, Sir, we may collect, from the fragments the antients

(a) Strabo, lib. 17.
(b) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.
(c) Ælian. De Nat. Animal. lib. 11.

have left us, relative to the religious opinions of the Egyptians concerning Athor. Had not their books periſhed with the Ptolemæan Library, did not their hieroglyphics conceal the knowledge they tranſmitted to poſterity, we, no doubt, ſhould find, among a people ſo learned, and ſo near the origin of human nature, ideas more clear and ſatisfactory; but let us enjoy what remains, and endeavour, ſomewhat, to pervade the myſteries of their religion.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

OF PHTHA, NEITH, AND CNEPH.

The Egyptians adored the Supreme Being under the names Phtha, Neith, and Cneph; attributes, ſignifying his power, wiſdom, and goodneſs. The temple of Phtha, at Memphis, of Neith, at Sais, and of Cneph, in the iſland of Elephantina. The pure worſhip preſerved only by the Prieſts, and initiated; the Vulgar forgot the Creator in his works.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I HAVE ſpoken, Sir, of Athor, and the dark Abyſs. But the Chaos of the Greek and Latin poets could produce nothing of itſelf; the Egyptian philoſophers acknowledge the Spirit which thence formed the Univerſe, and eſtabliſhed that ſtill unalterable order; which Spirit they called Phtha, Ordainer(*d*).

(*d*) La Croix, Treſor Epiſtolaire, liv. 3. Jablonſki, tom. I. ſays Phtha, in Coptic, ſignifies *Ordainer of Things.*

Jamblichus *(e)* informs us the Egyptians called that efficient ſpirit, which does all things with truth and wiſdom, Phtha; and the Greeks Vulcan, only conſidering the art with which it produces. This ſpirit, to which they aſſign the higheſt rank, they ſay, gave chaos firſt the form of an egg, and, from that, afterward, created all things. Thales, the Mileſian, taught by the prieſts of Memphis, ſays *(f)*, "Water is the prin-"ciple of all things, and God the ſpirit "which has formed the univerſe from this "humid principle." The verſe of Geneſis *(g)* "and the ſpirit of God moved "(brooded) upon the face of the waters," is very correſpondent to the Egyptian doctrine of the creation. We may naturally ſuppoſe Moſes, educated in the court of Pharaoh, there obtained a part of this knowledge, and, afterward, diſencumbered truth of myſtery and fable. The Egyptians, that they might give the Creator a ſenſible form, attributed two ſexes to him; that is, they acknowledged a power reſident in him

(e) De Myſteriis, ſect. 8.
(f) Cic. de Nat. Deorum. lib. 4.
(g) Chap. i. ver. 2.

which

which could produce without the aſſiſtance of any other being. Syneſius, full of this ancient theology, ſpeaking of him, ſays, "The father, mother, male, and female, "art thou *(b)*."

On the obeliſk of granite, tranſported from Egypt to Rome, among the hieroglyphics, interpretated by Hermapion, is the following remarkable paſſage, relative to Rameſtes, king of Heliopolis *(i)*. "Him hath "Phtha, father of the gods, choſen." The words, father of the gods, meant the ſtars, which the ſages of Egypt held to be the moſt ſtriking emblems of the deity, and which the people really adored. In the time of Herodotus *(k)*, fire, water, earth, heaven, the ſun, moon, day, and night, had divine honours paid them, but were only the gods of the vulgar; the initiated had another faith, and acknowledged the author of nature, only, who drew all creatures from non-entity.

The firſt dynaſty of Manetho includes the reign of the gods in Egypt *(l)*, at the head

(b) Hymn III.
(i) Ammian. Marcellin. lib. 17.
(k) Herod. lib. 2.
(l) Manetho apud Syncellum.

of

of whom is Phtha, or Vulcan, and, after him, the ſun, his ſon, which paſſage, underſtood allegorically, is not contrary to ſound theology. The ſun, the work of the Creator, may be conſidered as his ſon, and the Egyptians, to ennoble their origin, worſhipped the Creator as the firſt of their kings. To each of theſe material gods Manetho aſſigns a certain length of reign; which we muſt underſtand as ſolar and lunar cycles, invented by aſtronomers *(m)*. This dynaſty proves Phtha antecedent to time, the courſe of which was regulated, when men ſtudied the heavens, by the regular ſucceſſion of theſe viſible deities. The Egyptian prieſt poſitively declares *(n)*, "No determinate "epocha can be fixed to Phtha, becauſe he "ſhines as well in darkneſs as in day." The ſtars appear and diſappear, their empire had a beginning, therefore is not eternal. But the inviſible ſpirit was before time; his power ſhines, everlaſtingly, in his works, and his reign is immutable.

In the ſanctuaries of their temples the Egyptian prieſts ſecluded this ſublime doc-

(m) Vide Vignoles, tom. II.
(n) Manetho. apud Syncell.

trine,

trine, either tranſmitted by the firſt men or imagined by their own genius; as by Abraham, from the efforts of reaſon, and the ſtudy of aſtronomy *(o)*. Having enveloped them in allegories which themſelves, only, could unfold, they left the people in total ignorance, favoured their idolatry, and, at the death of each individual, thus prayed: "O Sun, and ye other gods, who beſtow "life, receive me; reſtore me to the eternal "deities, that I may dwell with them *(p)*."

The Greeks pretend that, according to the Egyptians, Phtha was only the moſt pure and ſubtle fire, above the ether, whence ſouls came to animate bodies; wherefore they named him Vulcan, who preſided over that element. "The ſages of Egypt," ſays Servius *(q)*, "embalmed, in order to pre-

(o) Clemens Alexandrinus affirms Abraham attained the knowledge of one God by the ſtudy of aſtronomy, which appears to be the opinion of the Arabs. Mahomet, having collected their traditions, repreſents the patriarch of the faithful looking to the heavens, and, after obſerving, with amazement, the appearance and diſappearance of ſun, moon, and ſtars, which he, at firſt, had ſuppoſed divinities, he exclaims, "I will not worſhip gods that riſe and "ſet."

(p) Porphyr. lib. 6.

(q) Serv. Comment. in Æneid. lib. 3.

"ſerve

" ſerve bodies; and that their ſouls, re-
" maining longer, might not quit them to
" animate others; the Romans, on the con-
" trary, immediately burn them, that they
" may return to their primitive nature."
Herodotus *(r)* ſuppoſes this metempſychoſis came firſt from Egypt. If theſe authors may be credited, the Egyptians held Phtha, or the Upper Ether, to be the being which ſucceſſively gave life to the univerſe. The Platoniſts and Pythagoreans held the ſame belief, and that the ſoul, immortal in its nature, leaving the body, returned to the ſoul of the world, whence it firſt came *(s)*. Theſe are the opinions of the Greeks; who, no doubt, disfigured the religion of Egypt, by mingling their own metaphyſical reveries. What I have cited, in a former part of this letter, proves Phtha was anciently regarded as the ordaining ſpirit, the grand architect of the univerſe; he was principally adored at Memphis, where he had a temple *(t)*;

(*r*) Lib. 2.

(*s*) Plutarch de placitis philoſoph. lib. 4.

(*t*) Deſcribed by Herodotus and Diodorus. Suidas adds the people of Memphis adored Vulcan by the name of Phtha.

but,

but, as I have ſaid, the worſhip of viſible deities prevailed with the people over that of the Supreme Being, to whom the prieſts only offered incenſe.

Phtha muſt not be ſeparated from that god of the Egyptians which, alſo, was the creating ſpirit: Neith ſignifies the diſpoſer of all things *(u)*. The firſt ſignified God taken in a general ſenſe; the ſecond, more particularly, characteriſed his wiſdom. Neith was worſhipped chiefly at Sais, a city of the Delta, where the prieſts had a famous college. Plato *(x)*, who had frequented it, thus ſpeaks. "Sais, the capital of its diſtrict, is a conſiderable city, of which "Amaſis was king. Neith, the Minerva "(Αθήνη) of the Greeks, is the titular divinity." The following inſcription, engraved in hieroglyphics, was on the door of the temple, and imports the ſublime idea they had conceived of Neith *(y)*. *I am what is, what was, what ſhall be; mortal has*

(*u*) Jablonſki, tom. I.

(*x*) Plato in Timæo.

(*y*) Proclus cites this inſcription, in his learned commentary on the Timæus of Plato; Plutarch in his Iſis and Oſiris.

never

never raiſed up my tunic (veil): the ſun is the fruit of my womb. This definition only can agree with God; who, ſelf-exiſtent, has neither beginning nor end, and includes in himſelf the paſt, preſent, and to come *(z)*. This incomprehenſible ſpirit conceals himſelf from man, who cannot raiſe up the veil. Theſe words, "the ſun is the fruit of my womb," clearly demonſtrate Neith and Phtha to be the ſame. Manetho, alſo, affirms, in a figurative ſenſe, Phtha is the father of the ſun. The Phœnicians, who received their religion and knowledge from their Egyptian brethren, alſo acknowledge Minerva, or Neith, for the author of nature *(a)*.

The prieſts of Egypt more particularly adored, in Neith, the divine wiſdom which guides the world, and enlightens men, and made her the protector of the arts. The warrior wore on his finger a ring, on which

(z) Man may be conſidered as the image of God, in certain reſpects; including, in himſelf, the paſt, preſent, and to come: the remembrance of what he was, is, and hopes to be, makes him enjoy, at the ſame time, theſe three modes of being. The Creator has, therefore, ſaid, in Geneſis, "Let us make man in our image."

(a) Julian. Orat. 4.

the

the ſcarabæus was engraved; the reaſon of which we learn from Horapollo *(b)*. "The "Egyptians pretend the world is compoſed "of male and female parts, and paint a ſca- "rab to repreſent Minerva *(c)*." This ring, worn by ſoldiers, was a token of the homage they paid the deity whoſe emblem they bore, and who diſpoſed of the fate of battles. Pſammenitus *(d)*, inſtructed by Neith, declared kings were under the protection of God, and from him derived their knowledge.

Cadmus, the Phœnician, was the firſt who carried this worſhip into Greece, and gave the name of Neith *(e)* to one of the gates of the Grecian Thebes. Egyptian theology was taught here, with which the poets ſoon mingled their charming allegories. Neith, their Pallas, roſe, armed, from the brain of Jupiter, and was celebrated by them

(*b*) Horapoll. Hieroglyph. lib. 1. [This is a diſputed paſſage. *T.*]

(*c*) I before ſaid the Egyptians, ſenſibly to mark the productive power of God, have painted the two ſexes, and, as they aſcribe both ſexes to the ſcarab, they made that the emblem of Neith.

(*d*) Jablonſki, tom I.

(*e*) Jablonſki, ubi ſupra.

as the goddeſs of battles, and of arts. Philoſophers, ſtill, ſaw truth through the obſcuring veil; but not ſo the people, who worſhipped a fabulous deity.

"The firſt woman who wove was an "Egyptian. She was ſeated; wherefore the "Egyptians repreſent Minerva ſeated *(f)*." They meant, no doubt, by this attitude, to remind men ſhe had taught them arts, and that from her they derived their knowledge. The Greeks, ever imitating them, engraved, painted, and ſculptured, Minerva ſeated *(g)*.

After adoring the power of the Creator in Phtha, and his wiſdom in Neith, the Egyptians worſhipped his goodneſs under the name of Cneph, or the greateſt good (*b*). "The "prieſts of Egypt called Cneph the Archi-"tect of the Univerſe (*i*)." Strabo mentions a temple of this deity, in the iſle of Elephantina, which temple ſtill ſubſiſts, as deſcribed in Letter XIII. vol. I. The ſymbol of this god was a ſerpent, according to Euſebius. "The ſerpent, within a circle,

(*f*) Euſtath. in Iliad. I.
(*g*) Strabo, lib. 13.
(*b*) Jablonſki, tom. I.
(*i*) Euſebius de Præp. Evangel. lib. 3.

" touching it at the two oppoſite points of its " circumference, ſignifies the good Genius." A particular ſpecies of ſerpent was choſen *(k)*. " There are ſacred ſerpents, near " Thebes, which are harmleſs *(l)*, having " two horns on the top of the head; when " they die they are buried in the temple of " Jupiter." The name of Cneph *(m)*, or good genius, was beſtowed on it, as well as the divinity it repreſented, and the people's veneration, perhaps, went no farther than the ſerpent. " I one day ſaw two men, " in Egypt, conteſting; one having per- " ceived a ſerpent, called it *Agathodaimon*, " (Αγαθοδαιμον) and ſtruggled to get it *(n)*."

The good genius of the Greeks and Romans muſt not be confounded with that of the Egyptians; the firſt underſtanding by this title an intermediate order, between divine and human; the latter, the benificence of him who preſides over heaven and earth,

(k) Herod. lib. 2.

(l) Theſe ſerpents, honoured by the name of Haridi, ſtill are famous, as treated by the prieſts of Achmim.

(m) The Phœnicians call the ſerpent, *Good Genius*, for the ſame reaſon the Egyptians name it *Cneph*.

(n) Plut. de Iſide & Oſiride.

and whoſe will directs the ſtars through the immenſity of ſpace.

Theſe are the religious opinions of the Egyptians concerning Phtha, Neith, and Cneph, three attributes of the ſame god, characterizing his wiſdom, power, and goodneſs. The worſhip was gradually loſt, or remained concealed in the temples; and the people, deceived by their prieſts, who gave them only ſymbols, or incapable of conceiving an infinite ſpirit, which every where marks his preſence, yet every where eſcapes our ſenſes, honoured his works, to which they addreſſed their offerings and prayers.

I have the honor to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

ON THE VISIBLE DEITIES OF EGYPT.

The Egyptians firſt adored the ſun, under its proper name, Phra; and, afterward, under that of Oſiris. This god became very famous, had temples, and ſacrifices, throughout Egypt; which originated with aſtronomers, who meaſured time by the courſe of the ſun, more regular than that of the moon. The word Oſiris, derived from Oſh Iri, author of time, denotes the reaſon the prieſts had for creating this allegoric deity.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

"THE ancient Egyptians, contemplating "the vaulted heavens, and admiring the "marvellous order of the univerſe, held the "ſun and moon to be eternal deities, and "paid them particular adoration; naming

" the one Oſiris, and the other Iſis (o)." This aſſertion is too general: it ought, to make it more conformable to truth, to have excepted the kings, the initiated, and, particularly, the prieſts, who did not believe that idolatry they taught the people; nay, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, their firſt doctrine was that theſe luminous bodies were the work of God. Be this as it may, the Egyptians, from the remoteſt times, have adored the ſun and moon, under the titles of the King and Queen of Heaven (p). The ſun was firſt called Phra (q). The father-in-law of the patriarch Joſeph was named, according to the ſeptuagint, Petephra, Prieſt of the Sun. Aſtronomers, obſerving its courſe and principal effects, gave it the ſymbolical name of Oſiris, which religion ſanctified. " It is known that Oſiris is only the " ſun: when the Egyptians deſcribe it, in " their hieroglyphics, they paint a ſceptre " and an eye (r)." They could not better pourtray this luminary, to which they attri-

(o) Diod. Sicul. lib. 1.
(p) Jeremiah, chapters 7. and 44.
(q) Jablonſki, tom. 1.
(r) Macrob. Saturnal. lib. 1.

buted

buted the empire of Heaven. Thus Martianus Capella (*s*), in his fine hymn, ſays, "Eye of the world, bright Olympian torch; "Latium calls thee Sun; becauſe, after "thy author, thou art the ſource of light. "The Nile names thee Serapis: and Mem"phis, adoring Oſiris, adores thee." Some authors, alſo, have called the Nile Oſiris. Plutarch gives the reaſon. "The Egyp"tians hold the Nile to be the preſerver "of their country, and that it draws its "ſource from Oſiris (*t*)." The vapours, raiſed by the ſun, and condenſed in the atmoſphere, fall in rain, and form the great river that gives wealth to Egypt. In this ſenſe, Homer calls it the ſtream of Jupiter (*u*). The Egyptians, ſays Herodotus (*x*), pretend that Oſiris and Bacchus are the ſame; which opinion has been eſpouſed by many of the Greeks, and is not improbable. The Egyptians made Oſiris travel from one end of the world to the other, deſcribed him as the king who had conquered

(*s*) Lib. 2.
(*t*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.
(*u*) Jupiter and the ſun, or Oſiris, are the ſame.
(*x*) Lib. 2.

the world, and heaped bleſſings on man. The Greeks, attributing ſimilar gifts and conqueſts to Bacchus, have ſaid he was Oſiris; however, in the ſacred language of Egypt, theſe travels only meant the courſe of the ſun, and the good he did men, which allegories have always been cuſtomary among the Orientals. Thus the Pſalmiſt (z) "He "hath ſet a tabernacle for the ſun, which "is a bridegroom coming out of his cham- "ber, and rejoiceth as a ſtrong man to run "a race. His going forth is from the end "of Heaven, and his circuit unto the ends "of it: and there is nothing hid from the "heat thereof." Tibullus has literally given the opinions of the Greeks in graceful and harmonious verſe (a):

Primus aratra manu ſolerti fecit Oſiris,
Et teneram ferro ſollicitavit humum.
Primus inexpertæ commiſit ſemina terræ,
Pomaque non notis legit ab arboribus.
Hic docuit teneram palis adjungere vitem:
Hic viridem durâ cædere falce comam.

A trait, which the beſt authors of antiquity give, evidently demonſtrates the Greeks

(z) Pſalm xix.
(a) Tibull. lib. 1. eleg. 8.

were

were wrong in wiſhing to eſtabliſh a perfect ſimilitude between Bacchus and Oſiris. The firſt was honoured as the author of the vine; but the Egyptians, far from attributing its culture to Oſiris, held wine in abhorrence. "The Egyptians (*b*) never drank wine, be- "fore Pſammetichus (*c*); holding this li- "quor to be the blood of the giants, who, "having made war on the gods, had pe- "riſhed in battle, and that the vine ſprang "from the earth mingled with their blood: "nor did they offer it in libations, thinking "it odious to the gods." This ſacred fable paſſed from Egypt to Perſia, and Clemens Alexandrinus (*d*) tells us, the Magi moſt carefully abſtained from wine. There was a law which forbad its uſe among the Arabs (*e*), and Ovington (*f*) affirms that the Bramins, at preſent, deteſt the liquor, and hold it in equal horror with Manes, who

(*b*) Plutarch de Iſide et Oſiride.
(*c*) One of the laſt of the Egyptian Pharaohs.
(*d*) Strom. 3.
(*e*) Diod. Sic. lib 1.
(*f*) Ovington's Travels, vol. 1.

ſuppoſed it the blood of dæmons. Whence this Oriental averſion for wine originated would be difficult to ſay; but exiſt it did, which, probably, was one reaſon why it was forbidden by Mahomet (*g*). Perhaps we ſhould ſeek for the cauſe in the curſe of Noah, pronounced upon Ham, who inſulted his father, finding him drunk. But, whether or no, the Egyptians deteſted it, and could not attribute the culture of the vine to Oſiris.

But what does this name mean? And why given to the ſun? This queſtion has excited the reſearches of the ancients and moderns, which they have laboured to reſolve. Diodorus (*b*) and Horapollo (*i*) ſay Oſiris ſignifies Πολυοφθαλμος, many-eyed; which interpretation might apply to the ſun, but will not explain the word Oſiris; for, though *Os* or *Oſh* means much, in Egyptian, *Iris* has no relation to the eye. "The name of Oſi-" ris (*k*) means many things, and may be

(*g*) Wine is an abomination of the devil. *Koran.*
(*b*) Lib. 1.
(*i*) Hieroglyph. lib. 1.
(*k*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

" interpreted

" interpreted many ways. It expreſſes ef-
" ficacious power, and benevolence." This, ſtill, is not the literal ſenſe. The learned Jablonſki *(l)* interprets the word more naturally. " Oſiris comes from *Oſh Iri, He wh*
" *makes time.*" The Egyptians underſtand the ſame by this expreſſion, as God, ſpeaking of the Sun and Moon *(m)*, " Let there be
" lights in the firmament of the Heaven,
" to divide the day from the night: and let
" them be for ſigns, and for ſeaſons, and for
" days, and years." The following paſſage favours this opinion. " The Egyptians paint
" the Sun borne in a ſhip, or on a crocodile;
" which, emblematically, ſignifies that the
" Sun, traverſing the mild and humid air,
" begets time *(n)*."

After long obſervation, the aſtronomers of Egypt regulated the year by the courſe of the ſun. The great golden circle, of three hundred and ſixty-five cubits, which they placed over the tomb of Oſymandyas, and

(*l*) Tom. I.
(*m*) Geneſis, I. 14.
(*n*) Clem. Alexand. apud Euſeb. de Prep. Evan. lib. 3.

on

on which the riſing and ſetting of the ſtars, for each day in the year, were deſcribed, is a clear proof of their labours and diſcoveries. "The prieſts of Thebes principally applied "themſelves to Aſtronomy and Philoſophy, "and meaſured time by the Sun, and not "by the Moon ( )." Julius Cæſar, who paſſed a year among them, and was inſtructed in their learning, reformed the Roman calendar, which was very defective. "This "prince, imitating the Egyptians, the only "people perfectly informed of divine things, "calculated the year from the progreſs of "the Sun, which ends his revolution in "three hundred and ſixty-five days, and ſix "hours (p)." The ſame author, in the ſpirit of the aſtronomers, holds the meaſurement of the year to be the principal uſe of the Sun. The ſolar year was found by the academy of Heliopolis, under the reign of Aſeth (q), 1325 years before Chriſt, and 320 after the departure of the Iſraelites: the

(o) Strabo, lib. 17.
(p) Macrob. Saturnal. lib. 1.
(q) Vignoles Chronologie, tom. 1.

prieſts

prieſts who, till then, had honoured the Sun under his proper name *Phra*, in memory of this important event beſtowed that of *Oſiris*, or Author of Time.

I have the honor to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

AMMON AND HERCULES EMBLEMS OF THE SUN.

Amoun, whence the Greeks derived Ammon, and the Latins Jupiter Ammon, particularly adored at Thebes, which is called in Scripture the city of Ammon, and by the Greeks Dioſpolis, the city of Jupiter. The ſtatue covered by the ſkin and head of a ram. This Deity, typifying the vernal Sun, uttered oracles, in a temple built in the Lybian deſerts. The ſtatue of Hercules, worſhipped with Ammon, at the vernal equinox, ſignified the ſtrength of the Sun at this ſeaſon.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Egyptians, applying themſelves to the ſtudy of Aſtronomy, perceived the aſpect of the Sun varied according to the ſign in which he was found, his motions ſlower at the ſolſtices, quicker at the equinoxes, and that

that his influence was more or leſs according. To theſe phænomena they aſſigned various characteriſtic marks. Having adopted hieroglyphics, which ſpeak by ſymbols, only, they, by turns, painted the Sun as a child, a man grown, and an old man, ſometimes joyful, ſometimes ſad, or reſplendent in light; by which the prieſts underſtood his aſtronomical aſpects, or phyſical effects. Accuſtomed to behold theſe figures on their temples, the vulgar forgot the ſymbol, and adored them as Deities. Macrobius, initiated in the myſteries of this antient religion, thus unveils them *(r)*; "To mark the ſhorteſt "day in the year, the Egyptians, at the "winter ſolſtice, take the ſymbol of the "Sun from the ſanctuary, under the form "of a child; whom, growing rapidly, at the "vernal equinox, they repreſent as a youth; "and, mature at the ſummer ſolſtice, they "give him a full face with a long beard. "At laſt they depict him as an old man, to "ſignify his decline." Adopted, no doubt, before the invention of writing, theſe emblems, preſerved by the prieſts, expreſſed

(*r*) Macrob. Saturnal. lib. 1.

the

the four ages of the Sun, and ſeaſons of the year.

Let us examine what the Egyptians meant by the name Ammon, ſo famous in antiquity. Amoun, ſays Plutarch (*s*), whence we derive Ammon, is the Egyptian name for Jupiter. This god was particularly adored at Thebes, which the ſacred books call Hammonno, the poſſeſſion of Hammon, and the ſeptuagint (*t*) the city of Ammon. "The inhabitants of Thebes hold the ram "to be ſacred, and eat not his fleſh; yet, "on the annual feſtival of Jupiter, they be-"head, and ſkin, the ram, with which they "cover the ſtatue of the God (*u*)." The meaning of this ceremony we are taught by Proclus (*x*), who ſays, the Egyptians held the ram in veneration, and becauſe this ſign, the firſt of the Zodiac, preſaged fruits, Euſebius adds, the ſymbol indicated

(*s*) De Iſide et Oſiride. Herodotus and Diodorus, alſo, give Jupiter the ſurname of Ammon.

(*t*) Ezekiel, cap. 30. The Greeks and Romans call it *Dioſpolis*, the city of Jupiter.

(*u*) Herod. lib. 2.

(*x*) Proclus in Timæum.

the conjunction of the Sun and Moon in the ram (*y*).

You recollect, Sir, what the ceremony was the prieſts of Ammon obſerved when they conſulted the oracle. Faithful followers of the opinions of their forefathers, who figured the Sun making a voyage in a ſhip, they bore, in a boat, the ſtatue of the god, formed of precious ſtones, and having a ram's head. Authorities and facts, ſo numerous, demonſtrate that Ammon, among the Egyptian Aſtronomers, repreſented the Sun, in which ſenſe Diodorus might ſay Oſiris and Ammon are the ſame (*z*). Yet theſe two names do not denote the ſame phænomena; the firſt ſignified the Sun to be the Author of Time, the ſecond announced Spring, and the commencement of the aſtronomical year, under the ſign of the ram, which was meant by the ſymbolical figure of the deity. The word Amoun, formed from Am-ouein (*a*), reſplendent, indicated the deſired effects which

(*y*) Euſeb. de Prep. Evangel. lib. 3.
(*z*) Lib. 1.
(*a*) Jablonſki, tom. 1.

the

the Sun produced when at the Equator; as lengthened days, ſuperiour light, and, particularly, the preſage of inundation and plenty.

The prieſts were accuſtomed to aſſociate Hercules in this worſhip. At the feaſt of Ammon, after covering the ſtatue of Jupiter with the ſkin of the ram, they placed near this ſymbolical deity the idol of Hercules (*b*), which, in their language, they called *Dſom*, or *Dſiom* (*c*), ſtrength, which characteriſed the power of the Sun when at the equinoctial. According to Plutarch (*d*), they alſo ſaid Hercules, placed in the Sun, turned with it; which has not eſcaped Macrobius (*e*). "The very name of Hercules (Ἡρακλῆς) ſhews it meant the Sun. "Ἠρας ſignifies air, and Κλέος ſplendor, "for what is the ſplendor of the air but "that illumination it receives from the Sun, "by whoſe departure it is left in profound "darkneſs?" Hence the fanciful allegories

(*b*) Herod. lib. 2.
(*c*) Jablonſki, tom. 1.
(*d*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.
(*e*) Macrob. Saturnal. lib. 1.

of the Greeks which atteſt that the twelve labours of the Hero allude to the Sun paſſing the twelve ſigns of the Zodiack, during his annual revolution.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXI.

OF HORUS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY.

The hawk was a ſymbol of Horus, as well as of Oſiris, to whom ſimilar attributes were frequently aſcribed; his throne ſupported by lions, becauſe he repreſented the Sun at the Summer ſolſtice: his education at Butis, on the banks of the grand lake, denoted his power in attracting vapours, which fell in dews on the earth; his victory over Typhon ſignified the good effects the Sun produced in Summer, as inundation, the expelling the South, and bringing the Eteſian, winds.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

HORUS, a famous deity of antient Egypt, was alſo, Sir, a type of the Sun. Plutarch affirms (*f*) the virtue reſident in the Sun, while he moves through ſpace, the Egyptians named Horus, and the Greeks Apollo. Three

(*f*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

cities,

cities, named after this god (*g*), prove the veneration he was held in by the people (*h*). The hawk equally ſignifies Oſiris and Horus, to which the ſame attributes were ſometimes aſcribed. In Hermapion's interpretation of the hieroglyphics engraved on the obeliſk at Heliopolis, are theſe remarkable words. "Horus is Lord Supreme, and the Author "of Time (*i*)," which are the principal attributes of Oſiris, and, to appertain to Horus, it follows Horus ſignified the Sun, in certain ſigns: as we learn from the oracle of Apollo, at Claros. "Know that the firſt "of the gods is Iao, called the Inviſible in "Winter, Jupiter in Spring (*k*), the Sun in "Summer, and, toward the end of Autumn, "the tender Iao." The Sun at the Summer ſolſtice, then, by pre-eminence, called the Sun, is the ſame as Horus. The Egyptians depicted him borne by lions (*l*) becauſe he

(*g*) Horapoll. Hieroglyph. lib. *i.*

(*h*) Their Egyptian name was *Cities of Horus*. The Greeks called them Cities of Apollo.

(*i*) Ammianus Marcellinus.

(*k*) *i. e. Amoun.* Which various denominations will be explained in the ſequel.

(*l*) Horapoll. Hieroglyph. lib. 1.

entered the ſign of Leo. Thoſe who preſided over divine things placed ſphinxes, then, at the entrance of canals, and ſacred fountains, to inform the people of the approaching inundation. We learn from Macrobius why the Greeks called Horus Apollo, and he confirms this opinion. "In their myſteries "they diſcovered, as an inviolable ſecret, "that the Sun, entering the ſuperior hemiſ-"phere, is called Apollo (*m*)." Theſe are concurring proofs that this emblematic deity only ſignified the Sun when in the Summer ſigns. This might lead to an interpretation of the ſacred fable which the prieſts invented of Horus, for they continually enveloped their religion in myſtery. Plutarch relates it at length (*n*): I ſhall only give an abſtract. They affirmed he was the ſon of Iſis and Oſiris; that Typhon, having killed Oſiris, his brother, ſeized the kingdom; but Horus, allying himſelf to Iſis, revenged his father's death, drove the tyrant from the throne, without taking his life, and reigned glorioufly in Egypt. Whoever has travelled, but a little,

(*m*) Macrob. Saturnal. lib. 1.
(*n*) De Iſide et Oſiride.

through

through this country, will obſerve phyſical phænomena, concealed under the veil of fable. The wind Khamſin often is very deſtructive in ſpring, raiſing vortices of ſcorching ſands which ſuffocate travellers, cloud the air, and hide the face of the ſun, ſo that the earth, ſometimes, remains plunged in darkneſs. Here are the death of Oſiris, and the reign of Typhon. Theſe tempeſts uſually happen in the months of February, March, and April; but are diſſipated when the ſun approaches Leo, becauſe it changes the atmoſphere, and brings the Eteſian winds which diſpel unwholſome vapours, and maintain coolneſs, and ſalubrity, under a fiery ſky. This is the triumph of Horus over Typhon, and this his glorious reign. Naturaliſts, obſerving the influence of the moon on the atmoſphere, allied her to the god to chaſe the uſurper from the throne. Conſidering Oſiris as father of time, the prieſts gave Horus, who reigned three months in the year, the title of his ſon. This I think to be the natural way of explaining the allegory. Men of learning muſt have underſtood a language familiar to them; the populace only, who ſaw not beyond the

ſurface, could regard theſe allegoric perſonages as real gods, and decree them prayers and ſacrifices. Jabloniſki (o), interpreting the epithet Arueri, which the Egyptians gave Horus, ſays it ſignified effective virtue; which expreſſion perfectly characterizes the phænomena that happen during the reign of this god in Egypt, where the ſun diſplays all his power, in ſummer, ſwelling the waters by the vapours he has attracted, that are driven among the Abyſſinian mountains, and requiting the huſbandman with the riches of agriculture. That they ſhould honour him with the name of Arueri, to indicate theſe auſpicious effects, was natural.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(o) Tom I.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

OF THE CELESTIAL SERAPIS.

Serapis adored under the Ptolemies, who built a ſtately temple in honour of him; though this deity was worſhipped in Egypt before their reign, and originated on the banks of the Nile; was an emblem of the ſun in autumn; named inviſible becauſe of the ſhortneſs of the day, in the north: was the Pluto of the Greeks, but diveſted of their poetical fables.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Ptolemies bringing from Sinope, a city of Pontus, to Alexandria, the ſtatue of a god, that arriving was called Serapis, propagated his worſhip throughout Egypt. The ſtately temple they built in his honour, which vied in grandeur with the capitol, the beauty of its ornaments, majeſtic architecture, feſtivals, and the pompous ceremonies they inſtituted, attracted the popular venera-

tion to this new deity. Serapis, the god of the court, almoſt obliterated thoſe of the ancient Egyptians. Provinces contended to build him temples, and burn incenſe on his altars; to which celebrity we muſt attribute the opinion of writers, who pretend his worſhip was here introduced by the Ptolemies, and, till then unknown; for various paſſages from better informed hiſtorians demonſtrate the reverſe. Plutarch (*p*) introduces a man who tells Alexander the Great, Serapis has appeared to me, broken my chains, and ſent me to thee. The Athenians, having decreed the honors of Bacchus to this conqueror, Diogenes exclaimed, let me then be Serapis (*q*); which paſſages prove this deity was known before the Ptolemies. Authors inform us he originated on the banks of the Nile. Several temples of Serapis are ſeen in Egypt, ſays Pauſanias (*r*). Alexandria poſſeſſes the moſt magnificent, the moſt ancient is at Memphis. Tacitus, whoſe teſtimony cannot be queſtioned, mentioning the god of

(*p*) Plut. in vita Alexand.
(*q*) Diog. Laert. in vitâ Diogenes.
(*r*) Pauſanias in Atticis.

Sinope,

Sinope, tranſported to Alexandria, thus ſpeaks (s): "A temple, worthy the gran-
"deur of the city, was built at Racho-
"tis (t), where had been an ancient cha-
"pel conſecrated to Serapis and Iſis." Theſe authorities leave no doubt concerning the antiquity of the Egyptian Serapis, and we alſo learn from hiſtory he was, in ſome reſpects, the Greek Pluto, and one of the ſymbols of the ſun. "When the god of Sinope (u) was
"tranſported to Alexandria, the interpreter
"Timotheus, and Manetho Sebennytus con-
"jectured, beholding the Cerberus and Dra-
"gon which adorned his ſtatue, that it re-
"preſented Pluto, and perſuaded Ptolemy
"this god and Serapis were the ſame, tho'
"not ſo called in the country whence he
"had been brought. On his arrival, there-
"fore, he was named Serapis, for thus the
"Egyptians call Pluto." Yet we muſt not ſuppoſe the Egyptian Pluto, like the Gre-

(s) Tacit. Annal. lib. 4.

(t) A ſmall place, inhabited by fiſhermen in the time of Alexander, but, afterward, a conſiderable ſuburb of Alexandria, where, at preſent, is a hill of rubbiſh, near a hundred feet high, under which the temple lies buried.

(u) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

cian,

cian, was the king of Hell, of ghoſts, and judge of the dead; this doctrine took birth in Greece, and was unknown at Memphis. Porphyry (x) tells us, "The prieſts of "Egypt by Pluto underſtand the ſun, near "the winter ſolſtice, when, remaining under "the earth, he traverſed and enlightened "an unknown world." For this reaſon Calliſthenes calls Serapis the inviſible god of Sinope; and Julian, ſpeaking of Pluto, ſays, "Plato affirms the ſublime ſouls "of virtuous men are borne before this god, "whom we, alſo, name Serapis, becauſe he "is inviſible (y)."

They called him inviſible becauſe the ſun, near the winter ſolſtice, remains longer concealed, and ſeems in haſte to hide himſelf from the northern nations; and they depicted him under two different colours, now luminous, and now dark blue, to indicate his abode ſix months in the northern, and ſix in the ſouthern, hemiſphere (z). The firſt was called Amoun, ſparkling, or

(x) Porphyr. apud Euſeb. Prep. Evang. lib. 3.
(y) Julian. Orat. 4.
(z) Macrob. Saturnal. lib. 1.

upper;

upper; the ſecond Serapis, or lower. Such are the moſt probable opinions reſpecting this emblematical deity, to be gathered from the ancients and Jablonſki; perhaps the ancient philoſophers of Greece meant by Pluto the ſun in winter, but the inventive poets made him the monarch of the infernal regions.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

OF HARPOCRATES.

Harpocrates was a ſymbol of the ſun at the winter ſolſtice, in Egypt, and the god of ſilence in Greece. The prieſts figured him with his feet joined, ſo as ſcarcely to be able to walk, as an emblem of the ſlow, and almoſt inſenſible, motion of the ſun at the tropic of Capricorn. They ſeated him on the flower of the lotus, becauſe it bloſſoms at the end of autumn.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

MACROBIUS tells us the Egyptians took the ſemblance of the ſun from the ſanctuary, under the form of a child, to announce to the people the ſhorteſt day; which emblematic deity was called Harpocrates (*a*). The Greeks made him the god of ſilence;

(*a*) Saturnal. lib. 1.

becauſe

because he was born with one of his fingers on his mouth. Isis was delivered of the tender Harpocrates at the winter solstice (*b*). This Egyptian name signifies lame (*c*), and he was depicted with this defect to indicate the slow, and almost insensible, motion of the sun at the tropic. The two feet of Harpocrates were joined so as to form but one, which the Egyptians meant as emblematic of the course of the sun, at the winter solstice (*d*). Plutarch adds, they depicted him seated on the flower of the lotus (*e*): nor could they find a symbol more expressive; for this stately lily of the north, as Herodotus calls it, blowed only at the end of autumn.

The priests who veiled the most striking phænomena of nature in fable, and thus formed an enigmatic theology, said Jupiter (Ammon), having his feet at first joined together, could not walk freely, and was so ashamed of the infirmity that he lived in solitude. Isis, sorry at his disaster, by separating, restored him the use of his legs. In

(*b*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(*c*) Jablonski Pantheon Egyptiacum, tom. I.

(*d*) Horapoll. Hieroglyphica, lib. 2.

(*e*) Plut. de Iside & Osiride.

this

this allegory we perceive Harpocrates, or the ſun, ſtationary at the winter ſolſtice; and, after the operation of Iſis, Ammon (the ſun), advancing more rapidly, when arrived at the Equator.

The Egyptians were not the only people who expreſſed themſelves by ſymbols; all ancient nations, eſpecially in the infancy of language, were obliged to adopt the uſe of parables and allegories: before the invention of letters, objects were neceſſary to ſpeak to the mind; and the metaphors ſo often employed in Hebrew and Arabic prove their antiquity. "The Paphlagonians ſaid the "ſun ſlept in winter, and waked in ſummer; and the Phrygians that he was enchained in winter, and walked free from "fetters in the ſpring (f)."

I have the honour to be, &c.

(f) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

LETTER XXIV.

MENDES A SYMBOL OF THE SUN.

Mendes probably the first emblem of the sun, signifying its productive virtue. The goat consecrated to him as the most prolific of animals. The priests initiated. The phallus, an emblem of generation, worn on their habits, and adorned the statues of their other deities: improperly named Pan by the Greeks.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE God I am going to speak of, Sir, was, apparently, the first symbol of the sun. The Egyptians, finding they were indebted to him for the richness of their country and inundation, that his beneficent beams, which gave health and life to all nature, made the plants sprout, and ripened the harvest, held the sun to be the first source of fertility, and adored him by the name of Mendes, which signifies

ſignifies moſt fruitful (*g*). That his productive power might plainly be denoted, they conſecrated the goat to him, the living image of the god it repreſented, and fed it in the temple of Mendes. The people of the Mendeſian province held feſtivals in its honour, wore mourning at its death, and paid it veneration ſo extraordinary that decency will not permit me to cite what Herodotus, Pindar, Plutarch, and others, have written. So much may ſuperſtition bewilder feeble humanity! The father of hiſtory (*h*), deceived by this adoration, ſuppoſed Mendes really ſignified a goat, and ſeveral of the Greek writers have adopted the error. Others have found and remarked that Mendes was the ſymbolic deity of fecundity; the goat its living emblem, and the ſun the principle. Suidas aſſerts, "The Egyptians adore "the goat becauſe it is conſecrated to gene-"rative virtue (*i*)." Diodorus (*k*) and Horapollo (*l*) are of the ſame opinion.

(*g*) Jablonſki, Pantheon Egyptiacum, tom. I
(*h*) Herod. lib. 2.
(*i*) Suidas ſub voce Mendes.
(*k*) Diod. lib. 1.
(*l*) Hieroglyph. lib. 1.

The

The Greeks pictured Pan with horns, and the feet and tail of a goat, and ſuppoſed an analogy between him and the Egyptian god, wherefore they called Mendes Pan, and the city of Chemmis Panopolis, now Achmim, where Mendes had a temple. This reſemblance was but apparent; Pan, the guardian of woods, caverns, and mountains, was a demi-god, while that of Egypt was in the number of the eight grand deities. "Hercules, Bacchus, and Pan (*m*) have lately been received in the temples of Greece. Pan (i. e. Mendes) is the moſt ancient of the eight grand gods of Egypt."—"The Egyptians honour Pan (*n*) with a particular worſhip, his ſtatue is in moſt of their temples, and the prieſts who ſucceed to the ſacred office are firſt initiated into his myſteries."

Theſe paſſages authorize us to ſuppoſe Mendes the firſt emblem of the ſun, and this is but rational; for, before aſtronomers had imagined the tropics, the equator, and obſerved the various phœnomena produced by

(*m*) Herodotus.
(*n*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

the ſun's revolution, the Egyptians muſt have remarked his productive virtue. Fully to depict it they created an emblematic deity and named him Mendes, moſt prolific, of which the goat was the image; for this reaſon Diodorus (o) declares Mendes and Oſiris are the ſame; and, in fact, they both denoted the ſun, but each meant different attributes. What gives this truth a farther degree of evidence is that the phallus, the ſymbol of generation, and, eſpecially, of Mendes, adorned all the deities I have ſpoken of, and the ſacerdotal habits of the prieſts.

I have enumerated the various denominations under which the ſun was adored in ancient Egypt: by the famous name of Oſiris they held him to be the author of time; Ammon marked his paſſage to the equator, announced ſpring and reviving light; Hercules denoted his benevolent power; the glorious reign of Horus meant the ſummer ſigns, and informed the people of the expulſion of the ſouth winds, and the progreſs of the inundation; Serapis ſignified his return from the

(o) Lib. 1.

Equinoctial

Equinoctial to the tropic of Cancer; Harpocrates the ſlowneſs of his courſe, when at the winter ſolſtice; and, laſtly, Mendes was the ſymbol of his generative virtue. From theſe attributes, thus perſonified, the prieſts formed a fabulous theology; which, the people, holding this ſacred; were led to worſhip chimerical gods. I ſhall next ſpeak of Iſis and the correſpondent deities: you will every where find the ſame ſyſtem, and perceive the prieſts ſtudying nature, aſtronomy, obſerving phyſical effects, and veiling their diſcoveries from the vulgar.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXV.

OF ISIS OR THE MOON.

The Egyptians firſt adored the moon under her proper name Ioh, which worſhip, brought to Greece, gave birth to the fable of Io. Obſerving her influence, they named her Iſis, the cauſe of plenty, and attributed the inundation to the tears of the deity, i. e. the dew of which ſhe was the reputed mother. The Copts ſtill pretend the dew, during the ſolſtice, ferments the waters, and makes them overflow.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Egyptians were unbounded in their veneration for the Moon; which, from the higheſt antiquity, they honoured as the queen of Heaven (*p*). They firſt adored her under her proper name of *Ioh* (*q*). Inachus, the

(*p*) Jeremiah.

(*q*) Jablonſki, Pantheon Ægypt, tom. II.

firſt

firſt king of Argos, brought this worſhip into Greece, one hundred and twenty years before Moſes *(r)*. "The cow is there," ſays Euſtathius *(ſ)*, "the ſymbol of Io, or "the Moon; for, in the Argive tongue, the "Moon is called Io."——"The Greeks "now call the Moon Io, in a hidden and "myſtical ſenſe *(t)*." After the Grecian language had prevailed over the Egyptian, this forgotten name appeared myſtical, and was only uſed within the temples, where they preſerved the origin of ancient religions; therefore Malala calls it myſtical.

Attached to the obſervation of the phænomena of nature, the prieſts of Egypt, remarking the Moon had an immediate influence on the atmoſphere, wind, and rain, held her, as well as the Sun, to be the ſource of the inundation, and, ſeeking a characteriſtic epithet, named her Iſis, which, in Egyptian, ſignifies the cauſe of abundance (*u*). This happened three hundred and twenty years

(*r*) Jablonſki ubi ſupra.
(*ſ*) Comment. in Dionyſ. Perieget.
(*t*) Chronolog. Johannis Malalæ.
(*u*) Jablonſki, Pantheon Ægyptiacum, tom. II.

after the departure of the Iſraelites, at which time they gave the Sun and Moon ſurnames proper to fix their diſcoveries, and preſent a new theology to the people. The origin of the Grecian fable muſt be attributed to this change, which makes Io croſs the ſea, metamorphoſed into a cow, and conducts her to Egypt, where ſhe receives the name of Iſis. Lucian, perfectly inſtructed in ancient mythology, makes Jupiter ſpeak thus. "Conduct Io to the banks of the Nile, "acroſs the ſea; let her become Iſis, the "goddeſs of the Egyptians, augment the "waters of the river, and let looſe the "winds." The moſt important event of the country being the increaſe of the Nile, on which the exiſtence of the nation depended, they moſt carefully ſought its cauſe. The prieſts, initiated in the myſteries, that is to ſay, inſtructed in the natural ſenſe of allegories with which they amuſed vulgar credulity, knew all that related to the inundation, and the ſigns by which they might judge whether it would be more or leſs favourable. Their intimate connection with the Ethiopians had procured them moſt valuable information,

which they kept among themſelves. "The "heavy rains, which fall in Summer, ſwell "the Nile, as Ariſtotle and Eudoxus affirm, "who ſay they received this information "from the Egyptian prieſts (*x*)." They alſo knew theſe rains were occaſioned by the north winds. "The rains of Abyſſinia are "attributed to the Eteſian winds, which "drive the northern clouds thither (*y*)." The learned were not ignorant of theſe merely phyſical effects; but, that they might hold the people in ſubjection, they involved them in myſtery, which they themſelves only underſtood.

The vulture, the ſymbol of Iſis, denoted ſhe had the power to engender, and let looſe, the winds. The Nile began to increaſe at the new Moon after the ſolſtice, wherefore, the prieſts, holding this planet to be the mother of the winds, decreed her the honour (*z*). "Iſis is the genius of the Nile (*a*). The "ſiſtrum ſhe holds in her right hand ſignified

(*x*) Euſtath. in Odyſs. IV.
(*y*) Pliny, lib. 5. Pomp. Mela, lib. 1.
(*z*) Euſeb. Præp. Evan. lib. 3.
(*a*) Servius in Æneid, lib. 8.

" the increaſe and flooding of the waters,
" the vaſe in her left their abundance in the
" canals." Temples were erected to her, in various provinces, and ſhe had every where altars, and prieſts. Euſtathius, the grammarian, ſays Cophtos is a city of the Thebais, where Io is adored by the name of Iſis; they celebrate the increaſe of the Nile with the ſiſtrum in theſe feſtivals. The people, according to the allegoric language of the prieſts, think they owe this benefit to the tears of the deity. According to Pauſanius, the Egyptians were perſuaded the tears of Iſis augmented the Nile, and made it overflow the fields, of which ſuperſtition the Copts are not yet cured; they ſtill ſay a dew falls at the ſolſtice, which ferments the water of the river, and produces the flood. Is not this dew the tears of the goddeſs, ſo famous among their forefathers? They intended to eſtabliſh an analogy between the phænomena attending the courſe of the Moon and thoſe of the inundation. " They ſay
" the degrees of the elevation of the waters
" anſwer to the phaſes of the Moon; that at
" Elephantina they riſe to twenty-eight cu-
" bits,

" bits, correſponding to the days of her " revolution; that at Mendes, where the in- " creaſe is leaſt, they approach ſeven cubits, " equal to the days of the firſt quarter; and " that the mean point of the increaſe at " Memphis is fourteen cubits, correſponding " to the full Moon *(b)*." Here we ſee with what attention they ſought for cauſes which had any relation to an event ſo intereſting to public felicity.

Having named the Moon Iſis, or the cauſe of abundance, the Egyptians beſtowed this epithet on the earth, as the mother of fruits. Macrobius ſays, It is known that Oſiris is the Sun, and Iſis *(c)* the Earth. " Iſis, in the " Egyptian tongue, denotes the Earth *(d)*." Thus conſidered, ſhe has great affinity with the Ceres of the Greeks. Herodotus declares her to be the ſame deity *(e)*. But, not to wander from the Egyptian theology, this denomination muſt not be extended to the globe in general. Plutarch, perfectly in-

(*b*) Plutarch de Iſide et Oſiride.
(*c*) Saturnalia, lib. 1.
(*d*) Servius in Æneid, lib. 8.
(*e*) Lib. 2.

formed,

formed, tells us the prieſts beſtowed the name of Iſis only on that part of Egypt which the Nile waters, alluding to its fecundity; and adds that, in ſacred language, the inundation was called the marriage of Oſiris with Iſis.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

OF THE STAR SOTHIS.

Some writers call Sothis Iſis, but this ſtar, called Sirius by the Greeks, and Canicula by the Latins, was only conſecrated to that goddeſs. The Egyptians formed two periods, dated at the riſing of this ſtar. Their great veneration for it proceeded from their being able, at the time of its heliacal riſing, to determine the height of the inundation; whence they named it the ſtar which makes the waters increaſe.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

ASTRONOMERS, having obſerved the courſe of Sothis, and the relation it had to Iſis and the inundation, propoſed this ſtar as an object of veneration, and conſecrated it by religion. Its fame was ſuch that ſeveral authors have called it Iſis. "Iſis is alſo the "name of a ſtar; called Sothis, in Egyptian, "and in Greek Aſtrocyon (Ἀστροκύων) *(f)*."—

(f) Horapoll. Hieroglyph. lib. 1.

"The

" The Egyptians affirm Sothis and Iſis are " the ſame *(g)*." Be theſe opinions as they may, Sothis, certainly, was not Iſis, but merely the conſtellation of the dog, and, particularly, the ſtar Sirius. The Egyptians dated the commencement of the civil year from his riſing. " The ſtar which the Greeks call " Sirius, and the dog ſtar, the Egyptians " name Sothis. The conſtellation of Orion " and the dog are conſecrated to Horus and " Iſis *(h)*." Theon the aſtronomer ſupports this opinion *(i)*, " Sirius riſes about eleven " at night, at which time the Egyptian year " begins, and his riſing has been conſecrated " to Iſis."——" Aquarius is not at Mem- " phis, as at Rome, the beginning of the " year, but Cancer, near which ſign is " Sothis, which the Greeks call the dog. " The firſt day of the Egyptian month, " and, according to them, of the crea- " tion of the world, is the riſing of this " ſtar *(k)*."——" Antiquity aſſigns the lion

(*g*) Damaſius in vitâ Iſidori.
(*h*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.
(*i*) Theon. in Arati Phænom.
(*k*) Porphyr. de Antro Nympharum.

" and

" and the crab to the Sun and Moon, becauſe " they were under thoſe ſigns at the crea- " tion (l)." Theſe laſt words may be ſuppoſed to mark the time when men, after numerous obſervations on the motion of the celeſtial bodies, formed their diſcoveries into one doctrinal ſyſtem, which they called Aſtronomy, and dated the creation from that epocha. Were this conjecture true it would prove the Egyptians to be the moſt antient of aſtronomers, for authors attribute to them this allegoric language.

Theſe citations, Sir, demonſtrate Sothis was not Iſis, but conſecrated to Iſis. The aſtronomers have two periods they called Sothic, becauſe they were dated at the riſing of this ſtar. The firſt comprehended one thouſand four hundred and ſixty-one years, in which they principally conſidered the courſe of the Sun, that, after this long revolution, returned to the ſame poſition in the heavens. The duration of the ſecond was twenty-five years, and related to the courſe of the Sun and Moon. They had obſerved that, after this ſpace of time, the new Moons

(l) Macrob. Somn. Scipionis.

LETTER XXVII.

OF BUBASTIS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY.

Bubaſtis highly honoured in Egypt. A city bore her name: aided pregnant women, and, therefore, called Diana, and Ilithyia, by the Greeks and Latins: repreſented the new moon: had feſtivals on the third day of the month, becauſe the creſcent then became viſible.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Egyptians, Sir, gave different names to the ſun, either to characteriſe its effects, or relations to the earth: they followed the ſame method with the moon. Choeremon, a ſacred writer of Egypt, puts this beyond doubt *(p)*. "All that has been aſſerted of "Oſiris and Iſis, each religious fable ſigni- "fies the phaſes of the moon, and the "courſe of the ſun."

(p) Vide Porphyrii Epiſt. ad Anebo.

Bubaſtis

Bubaſtis was the principal attribute of Iſis, which theology perſonified, and made a deity, in honour of whom a city was built, bearing her name, and a temple *(q)*, where, at a certain ſeaſon of the year, the people from all parts of Egypt aſſembled. The ſymbol of this goddeſs was a cat, fed with conſecrated food by the prieſts, embalmed at its death, and borne with funeral pomp to its deſtined tomb. The ancients have explained this worſhip in various ways, all little probable, in my opinion, and which I ſhall not recite. The Greeks ſay, when Typhon declared war on the gods, Apollo changed himſelf to the vulture, Mercury to the ibis, and Bubaſtis to the cat, and that the people's veneration for the latter originated in this fable; but they borrowed their ideas from the Egyptians, who thought very differently. Be this as it may, the cat was highly honoured in Egypt, and a Roman ſoldier, imprudently killing one, was inſtantly ſtoned by the populace.

In the language of the prieſts, Bubaſtis was the daughter of Iſis, and, in certain

(*q*) Herod. lib. 2.

caſes, her repreſentative; hence the Greeks, who worſhipped the moon under the name of Diana, beſtowed this name on the Egyptian deity (*r*). The Egyptians attributed to her the virtue of ſuccouring pregnant women. Nicarchus (*s*) proves this when, ſpeaking of a lady who, without invoking her, had been ſafely delivered, he ſays, "Thus the function of Bubaſtis has been "rendered uſeleſs! Should women be brought "to bed like Philænium; what muſt be-"come of the goddeſs?"

The Greeks and Latins, diſciples of the Egyptians, aſcribed the ſame power to Diana, whom Horace thought worthy of the following lines (*t*):

Montium cuſtos nemorumque virgo,
Quæ laborantes utero puellas
Ter vocata audis, adimiſque letho,
Diva triformis.

Philoſophers will ſeek the origin of this worſhip in the laws nature has impoſed on women, which, in ſome ſort, accord with

(*r*) Herod. lib. 2.
(*s*) Anthologia, lib. 1.
(*t*) Hor. lib. III. ode xxii.

lunar

lunar revolutions, though, with the poets, they have concealed them in allegories.

Not that there is a perfect reſemblance between the two deities: The Diana of the Greeks was the goddeſs of the woods and the chace; not ſo the Bubaſtis of the Egyptians. The firſt was the daughter of Jupiter and Latona; the latter of Oſiris and Iſis.

A barbarous cuſtom was introduced in the feſtivals, held in honour of Bubaſtis, whom the Greeks alſo called Ilithyia, or Lucina, to ſignify her influence on child-bearing. Under this name the Egyptians adored her, in the city of Ilithyia, near Latopolis *(u)*. "In "this city *(x)* men, called Typhons, were "burned alive, as Manetho affirms, and their "aſhes were ſcattered to the winds."—— "Amoſis *(y)* aboliſhed theſe ſanguinary ſa- "crifices, ſubſtituting wax figures, as large "as life." Herodotus (*z*) poſitively maintains the Egyptians were never guilty of this

(u) Strabo, lib. 17, mentions this city, no remains of which are now to be found.

(x) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

(y) Porphyr. de Abſtinentiâ.

(z) Lib. 2. The Egyptians ſay this hiſtorian only ſacrificed hogs, calves, oxen, and geeſe.

crime. "How," exclaims he, "could a "people who reluctantly were brought to "immolate a few animals, ſhed human blood "on the altars of the gods?" Teſtimonies being very poſitive on both ſides, it may be ſuppoſed the Arab paſtors, who ſubjugated Egypt, long before the coming of the Iſraelites, introduced a barbarous cuſtom, eſtabliſhed among themſelves from the remoteſt antiquity (*a*). This opinion gains probability from the Egyptians ceaſing to ſhed human blood, when Amoſis had taken Heliopolis from theſe ferocious conquerors, and driven them toward the frontiers of Arabia.

The queſtion, here, naturally occurs, how might Bubaſtis be called the daughter of Iſis, being equally the ſymbol of the Moon? Egyptian theology eaſily explains theſe ſeeming contradictions. Iſis was the general name

(*a*) "The Dumatenian Arabs annually killed a child, "and buried it under the altar, uſing its corpſe as a divine "idol." *Porphyr. de Abſtinentiâ, lib.* 2. I might bring many other citations to prove the Arabs had human ſacrifices. Mahomet, ſtrongly reprehending this abominable cuſtom, has eradicated it from among them. Throughout the earth we find, with aſtoniſhment, examining the origin of nations, there are none who have not offered men in ſacrifice to the Gods.

of

of the Moon; Bubaſtis one of its attributes. Sol in conjunction with Luna was the celeſtial marriage of Oſiris with Iſis; and the creſcent, which three days after appeared, was, allegorically, their daughter. In this ſenſe the Hebrews called the ſame appearance the birth of the Moon; and thus Horace (*b*):

> Cœlo ſupinas ſi tuleris manus
> Naſcente Lunâ, Ruſtica Phidyle; &c.

Hence we learn why, in the city of Ilithyia, where Bubaſtis was adored, there was a particular ceremony on the third day of the lunar month (*c*). The Egyptians then kept a ſolemn feſtival, in honour of Bubaſtis, which, in their language, ſignified New Moon (*d*). The creſcent on her head viſibly expreſſed the meaning of the prieſts when they formed this ſymbolical deity.

(*b*) Hor. lib. III. ode 23.
(*c*) Euſeb. Prep. Evan. lib. 3.
(*d*) Jablonſki Panth. Egypt. tom. II.

LETTER XXVIII.

OF BUTIS, A SYMBOL OF THE FULL MOON.

This deity, the Latona of the Greeks, had a famous temple, in the city of Butis, and a ſanctuary made from one enormous block of granite. Uttered oracles: her temple ſaid to be in a moving iſland. Being moſt abundant at the Full Moon, ſhe was thought to have cauſed the dew. Said to have educated Horus, and ſaved him from the ſnares of Typhon.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Egyptians, alſo, revered an emblematic deity, named Buto, or Butis, which, in certain reſpects, was the ſame with Iſis; and built the city Butis, on that branch of the Nile which, running near Sebennytis, now Semennoud, diſcharges itſelf into Lake Bourlos. Here ſhe was adored, in a magnificent temple, which I have deſcribed, from Herodotus, in Letter XXII. Vol. I. The

ſanctuary

ſanctuary was a ſingle block of granite, a cube, each ſide of which was ſixty feet, and the largeſt and heavieſt ſtone known to hiſtory *(e)*. The oracle of Butis became ſo famous that the Egyptians came to conſult it from all parts. In the Grecian mythology, which is derived from ſacerdotal fables, this deity is called Latona *(f)*; the Egyptians pretend ſhe had nurtured Horus and Bubaſtis, and that her temple was built on a floating iſland. The Greeks, imitating their maſters, ſay Latona, the mother of Apollo and Diana, had taken refuge in Delos, which floated as impelled by the winds.—Notwithſtanding the queſtion of Herodotus,

(*e*) The block from which this ſanctuary was cut had but five ſides, the cieling being formed of another ſtone. Theſe ſides were 60 feet ſquare, and ſix in thickneſs, ſo that it muſt have contained 91584 cubic feet, and this number multiplied into 184 pounds, the weight of a cubic foot of granite, gives 16,851,456 pounds, from which, if we deduct 851,456 pounds for the entrance, the dimenſions of which the hiſtorian has not preſerved, there will remain 16,000,000 pounds for the whole weight of this enormous maſs, the moſt ſtupendous ever moved by human powers. *See the Preface.*

(*f*) Herod. lib. 2.

how might an iſland move and ſwim *(g)*? they adopted the Egyptian allegory in their theology; the poets embelliſhed it, and the people, incapable of underſtanding the true meaning, worſhipped a chimæra.

Let us examine, for this is the true object of enquiry, what the prieſts meant. The phænomena of nature was their peculiar ſtudy, which they uninterruptedly purſued under a climate much leſs variable than that of Europe. They learned to foreſee, from the obſervations of ages, preſerved in the ſacred archives, what muſt happen at ſtated ſeaſons *(b)*. They had remarked that dew was not abundant at the New Moon, but exceedingly ſo at the full: they ſuppoſed the Moon greatly to influence the atmoſphere, to attract vapours from lakes and rivers, and return them in dew; they, therefore, made the Full Moon a deity, which they named Butis. Agreeable to their principles, her abode was beſide the grand lake, that ſhe might more eaſily quench her thirſt; which

(*g*) Herod. lib. 2.

(*b*) A nation who had a period of 1461 years muſt, for many ages, have obſerved the heavens and phænomena of

doctrine,

doctrine, come from Egypt, or where it will, or whether or not ſuppoſed by Philoſophers to be well founded, has been adopted by many of the ancients and moderns.

" The ſtoics ſay the Sun heats the waters " of the ſea with his rays, and the Moon " attracts the mild humidity of lakes and " fountains *(i)*." Pliny ſays *(k)*, " Soft " waters are the element of the Moon, and " ſalt that of the Sun."—" At the full of " the Moon *(l)*, the air diſſolves in rain; " or, if the ſky is ſerene, diſtills abundant " dews, which occaſioned the lyric poet, " Alcman, to call the dew the ſon of the " Air and the Moon." Among modern Naturaliſts, M. Mile *(m)* has adopted this opinion. " In a fine day, and, eſpecially, " in Spring, a cold and ſubtle vapour is " attracted by the Moon, into the middle " region of the air; whence, ſoon con- " denſed to imperceptible drops, it falls to " the ground, in abundant dews, and yields " the neceſſary nutriment to plants."

(*i*) Plutarch.
(*k*) Lib. 2.
(*l*) Macrob. Saturnal. lib. 7.
(*m*) Hiſt. Nat. tom. 2.

I do

I do not cite theſe, Sir, as indubitable authorities. No one can deny the Moon greatly to influence the atmoſphere; but, I believe, it would be difficult to prove it attracts water. This is the property of the Sun, which, by expanding humid particles, renders them lighter than the air, through which they riſe, till they find an equilibrium. But were the ancients ignorant of this attraction, or do not the cited paſſages tend to prove they were not, and that they knew it was greater when the Sun and Moon were in oppoſition? Whether or not, the Egyptians, living in a hot climate, ſeldom refreſhed by the ſalutary rains common to others, and which would be uninhabitable did not night dews (n) give life to vegetables, carefully obſerved how they were produced; and, perceiving them heavieſt at the Full Moon, created a preſiding deity. "Dew "falls moſt abundantly at the full of the "Moon (o)."——"In Egypt, Bactria, and

(n) They are ſo abundant, eſpecially in Summer, that the earth is deeply ſoaked, and, in the morning, it might be ſuppoſed to have rained during night.

(o) Plutarch.

"at

" at Babylon, where it ſeldom rains, plants " are fed by dews (*p*)." For this reaſon the Scripture often promiſed the Iſraelites, who inhabited a climate much like that of Egypt, dew, as a ſignal favour; and foretold its want, as a chaſtiſement.

The Egyptians were attentive obſervers, and divided the time (*q*) between the New and Full Moon into three equal parts. The firſt was called the imperfect gift; and the third, from the 11th to the 15th, was dignified with the title of the perfect gift; becauſe the dews then fell abundantly. The name of Butis, a ſymbolical deity, preciſely marked what they ſuppoſed the cauſe; for it ſignifies the planet that attracts humidity, or the mother of dew (*r*). Here we diſcover the genius of the prieſts; ever concealing natural effects under allegory. The following is the fable they invented (*s*): " The Egyp- " tians ſay that Latona (Butis) one of their " eight great deities, inhabiting the city of " Butis, where her oracle is, received Horus

(*p*) Theophraſt. Hiſt. Plantarum.
(*q*) Proclus. Comment. in Timæum.
(*r*) Jablonſki Panth. Egypt. tom. II.
(*s*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

" in

" in charge from Iſis, and hid him in a " floating iſland, preſerving him from the " attempts of Typhon, who came here in " ſearch of the ſon of Oſiris; for they pre- " tend that Horus, or Apollo, and Bubaſtis, " whom we call Diana, were the children " of Oſiris and Iſis."

I have ſpoken, Sir, of the deſtructive ſouth winds, which raiſe vortices of ſcorching duſt, and ſuffocate man and beaſt in the deſerts. One of their moſt pernicious effects is abſolutely to prevent the falling of the dews, ſo neceſſary to vegetation in Egypt. Here is the tyrant Typhon, ſearching the ſon of Oſiris, to put him to death; but Iſis confides him to Butis, whoſe abode is amidſt the waters. That is to ſay, the exhalations of the Sun, and the influence of the Moon on the atmoſphere, preventing thoſe ills the Khamſin would cauſe, beſtow the ſalutary dews which renovate nature. This I believe to be the natural interpretation of the ſacerdotal fable.

I have the honor to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

THE NILE, AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GOD.

The Nile deified; had cities, built in his honour, prieſts, feſtivals, and ſacrifices. His firſt name Yaro, river; but, after obſerving the phænomena of his inundation, they called him Neilon: i. e. increaſes at a certain ſeaſon. A banquet publicly prepared for him, at the Summer ſolſtice; without which ceremony the people believed he would not overflow his banks.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I HAVE deſcribed the Nile, Sir, as the river to which Egypt owes its fertility and wealth. I muſt now depict it as the deity to whom ſuperſtition erected altars. You are aware of its importance; ſince, were it not for its fruitful waters, the country would be a deſert. Theſe high advantages are indicated by the veneration of the people, which became folly. "No god is more ſolemnly worſhipped

" than the Nile *(t)*." The Egyptians are not the ſole people who have deified rivers *(u)*. The ancient Greeks and Indians granted them divine honours; but the Egyptian prieſts ſurpaſſed them in pompous ceremonies. They even ſeemed only to adore Oſiris and Iſis becauſe of their relation to the Nile, and influence over his waters. They firſt called him *Yaro (x)*, which general denomination was long preſerved; and, perhaps, there was no other in Homer's time, ſince this geographical poet ſimply calls it the river of Egypt. Having obſerved, for ages, the phænomena of its increaſe, they beſtowed the epithet Neilon *(y)*. This characteriſtic expreſſion, adopted by all nations, obliterated the ancient name. Heſiod employs it firſt, whence we may conjecture he was poſterior to Homer. " Thetis " has produced great rivers from the ocean; the " Nile, the Alpheus, and the Eridanus *(z)*."

(t) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

(u) Maximus Tyrius.

(x) יאר Geneſis, chap. 41. This word in the Coptic ſignifies river. Jablon. Panth. Egypt. tom. II.

(y) Derived from the Egyptian Nei Alei, which increaſes at a certain ſeaſon: hence the Greek Νειλος; and the Latin Nilus. Jablonſki ubi. ſup.

(z) Heſiod. Theogon.

The

The Ethiopians and Egyptians called it by different names. "The river, which, in its "long windings, waters the lands of Ethi- "opia, is called Siris; but the moment its "azure ſtream reaches Syene, it is then the "Nile *(a)*."——"The rivulets which form "this great river, guſh from the mountains "lying on the eaſt of Libya. The Ethio- "pians name it Siris, and the people of Syene "the Nile *(b)*." The Egyptians thought they could not ſufficiently diſplay their grati- tude for the river to which they owed their exiſtence. The pompous titles of father *(c)*, preſerver of the country, and the terreſtrial Oſiris, were given it: the gods were feigned to have been born on its banks *(d)*, which muſt be underſtood allegorically; Nicopolis *(e)* was founded in its honour, and a ſtately temple erected to it there. From Herodotus we learn *(f)* that prieſts were conſecrated to

(*a*) Dionyſ. Perieget.

(*b*) Priſcian——This is confirmed by Solinus and Pliny lib. 5.

(*c*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

(*d*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

(*e*) Vide Stephanum Byzantinum.

(*f*) Lib. 2.

the Nile, in the cities; whoſe principal occupation was to embalm bodies, killed by the crocodiles, or drowned in its waters. "There "was a temple, remarkably grand, in a town "of Egypt, where was a wooden ſtatue, fa- "mous for being adored by the people, and "carried by the impious prieſts from town to "town, in honour of the Nile *(g)*."—— "The Nile gives fruitfulneſs to this country, "and the god is invited, with holy ceremo- "nies, to a ſplendid feaſt, annually prepared "for him, that he may overflow the land: "ſhould the prieſts fail in obſerving this cere- "mony, at the proper time, he would ceaſe "to fertilize the plains of Egypt" *(b.)*

The prieſts evidently impoſed on vulgar credulity, and inſtituted a ſuperſtitious worſhip, the inefficacy of which they knew, that they might become mediators between heaven and earth, and the ſuppoſed diſpenſers of plenty. The enigmatic theology they had framed, and which the hieroglyphics concealed from the people, admirably ſerved their purpoſe, and they employed all their know-

(*g*) Palladius. cap. 57.
(*h*) Libanius Orat. pro Templis.

ledge

ledge to render it reſpectable; which obſervation is applicable to many nations.

The grand feſtival of the Nile was at the Summer ſolſtice, when the inundation begins. "This is the moſt ſolemn and celebrated feſ-"tival of the Egyptians, who pay their river "divine honours, and revere him as the firſt "of their deities, proclaiming him the rival "of Heaven, ſince, without the aid of clouds "and rain, he waters the lands *(i)*." The type of his increaſe was a Nilometer; which, when it began, the prieſts took, from the temple of Serapis, and bore, in pomp, through the towns, and cities. This is the wooden ſtatue that excites the anger of Palladius. When the waters fell they replaced it in the ſanctuary. They had, likewiſe, another emblem of the inundation, ſculptured in ſtone, dedicated to the god of the Nile. Pliny, *(k)*. ſpeaking of the Baſaltes, ſays, "The greateſt known is that ſent to the Tem-"ple of Peace, by the Emperor Veſpaſian; it "repreſents the Nile, with ſixteen children "playing round him, intimating the number

(*i*) Heliodorus, Lib. 9.
(*k*) Lib. 36.

"of cubits to which his waters riſe." Such, Sir, are the religious opinions of the ancient Egyptians, concerning the Nile; and ſuch the feſtivals ſuperſtition held in its honor, which are not yet wholly aboliſhed: their memory is preſerved in the pomp with which the canal of Grand Cairo is annually opened.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

OF APIS, THE SACRED OX.

The fame of Apis: princes and kings came to offer him ſacrifice: his diſtinctive marks: Inauguration: The place where he was kept, and the temple to which carried at his death. The celebration of the birth of the new Apis: was the allegorical god of the ſolar year, the type of the cycle of twenty-five years, and the ſymbol of inundation.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

APIS, become famous in Egypt, was renowned among neighbouring nations. Pomponius Mela *(l)*, Ælian *(m)*, and Lucian, who ſpeak after the prieſts, inform us he was generally worſhipped in the country, and his divinity proved by evident marks. Alexander,

(*l*) Lib. I.
(*m*) Lib. II.

having conquered the kingdom, diſdained not to offer him ſacrifice *(n)*. Titus *(o)*, Adrian *(p)*, and Germanicus (*q*), went to viſit and pay him homage. Theſe great princes, doubtleſs, knew the abſurdity of ſuch adoration; but curioſity induced them to learn the myſteries of the prieſts, and the deſire of gaining the love of the Egyptians led them to offer incenſe to their idol. The beſt and moſt authentic writers, on Egyptian mythology, ſay, Apis was a ſymbolical deity. "Among their conſecrated animals Mnevis "and Apis are the moſt famous; the firſt an "emblem of the ſun, the ſecond of the moon "*(r)*." Porphyrius *(s)*, tells us Apis bore characteriſtic ſigns of both thoſe luminaries; and Macrobius *(t)*, confirming this opinion, adds, he was equally conſecrated to them. You may well ſuppoſe, Sir, an ox become the object of public adoration, was not produced like other animals; the prieſts affirmed

(*n*) Arrian. Expedit. Alexand.
(*o*) Sueton. in Vita Titi.
(*p*) Spartian. in Vita Adriani.
(*q*) Tacit. Annal. lib. 2.
(*r*) Ammian. Marcellin. lib. 22.
(*s*) Apud Euſeb. de Præp. Evan. lib. 3.
(*t*) Saturnal.

his

his origin was divine. Apis is ſeldom generated, nor ever according to the uſual laws of nature. The Egyptians affirm it is by celeſtial fire *(u)*. Plutarch explains this paſſage. "The prieſts pretend the Moon ſheds a gene-"rative light, with which ſhould a cow, "wanting the bull, be ſtruck ſhe conceives "Apis, and he bears the ſigns of that planet "*(x)*." Herodotus in Euterpe ſays the ſame. Such were the fables the prieſts taught, and the vulgar, to whom this god was the preſage of Plenty, eagerly received, and blindly believed them. Pliny has deſcribed the marks of the ſacred ox. "A white ſpot, like a creſcent, on the "right ſide, and a ſwelling under the tongue, "diſtinguiſhed Apis *(y)*." When the cow, ſuppoſed to be impregnated by lunar rays, brought forth, the prieſts went to examine the calf, and, if thus marked, they proclaimed the birth of Apis and fertility. "An "edifice was built for the new god, facing "the riſing ſun, according to the precepts of "Hermes, where he was fed, four months, "with milk; after which the prieſts went in

(*u*) Pomp. Mela, lib. 1.
(*x*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.
(*y*) Plin. lib. 8. Confirmed by Ælian, lib. 11.

" pomp to his abode, and ſaluted him by the " name of Apis *(z)*." They then placed him in a veſſel, magnificently ornamented, covered with a rich carpet, and ſparkling with gold, and conducted him to Nilopolis, ſinging hymns and burning incenſe. Here they kept him forty days *(a)*, during which women, only, had permiſſion to ſee and ſalute him in a manner I ſhall not relate, but which is proved from good authority: while he lived they were no more admitted into his preſence. Having been inaugurated, in this city, the ſame proceſſion, with innumerable boats, took the god to Memphis *(b)*, where, all ceremonies ending, he became wholly ſacred *(c)*. Apis had a ſtately dwelling, and the place where he lay was myſtically called *the bed**. Strabo (*d*) viſited, and thus deſcribed his palace. " The edifice where " Apis remains is near the temple of Vulcan. " He is fed in a holy apartment, before " which is a grand court. The cow, his

(z) Ælian. Hiſt. Animal. lib. 11.

(a) Diod. Sic. lib. 2.——Euſeb. Præp. Evan. lib. 3.

(b) Ammian. Marcellin.

(c) Plin. lib. 8.

* The Latin reads *thalamus*, chamber, T.

(d) Lib. 17.

" dam,

" dam, is kept in a houſe on one of its ſides; " and, ſometimes, to gratify the curioſity of " ſtrangers, he is brought out, into this " court. He may always be ſeen through a " window; but the prieſts alſo ſhow him to " the public." Solinus ſays they once a year preſent him a heifer, which they put to death on the ſame day.

An ox, thus marvellouſly procreated, neceſſarily had ſupernatural knowledge. Thus the prieſts affirmed he foretold the future, by his geſtures, motions, and other modes, which they interpreted according to their fancies. " Apis has two temples, called beds, " *(thalamos)* which ſerve as oracles to the " people. If, when conſulted, he enters " the one, the prediction is favourable; and " the reverſe, if the other. He gives anſwers " to individuals, by taking food from their " hands; this he refuſed from the hand of " Germanicus, who died ſoon after *(e)*." It were unjuſt to imagine this reſpectable writer had faith in ſuch predictions; he gives the opinions of the Egyptians, and only cites facts, without ſpeaking his own ſentiments.

(e) Plin. lib. 8.

We alſo learn *(f)* that, during the abode of Eudoxus the Aſtronomer in Egypt, Apis ſeemed to lick the hem of his garment, and the prieſts foretold he would become famous, but that his career would be ſhort. Various hiſtorians relate that children, playing round the ſacred ox, ſuddenly felt themſelves inſpired, foreſaw the future, and unveiled its events. Thus powerful is ſuperſtition over the mind of man, who, yet, is vain of his penetration.

I have ſpoken of the inſtallation of Apis. His birth is annually celebrated, for the ſpace of a week *(g)*. The people aſſemble to offer him ſacrifices, and, what may ſeem ſurpriſing, they immolate oxen *(h)*. This ſolemnity paſſes not without a miracle. Ammianus Marcellinus, who collected the opinions of the ancients, ſays, during the ſeven days when the prieſts celebrated the birth of Apis, crocodiles, forgetting their natural ferocity, became tame, and did harm to no one *(i)*.

(*f*) Diog. Laer. lib. 7.
(*g*) Nicetas.
(*h*) Herod. lib. 2.
(*i*) Lib. 22 Solinus too cites this opinion.

Yet

Yet could not this ox, ſo honoured, paſs the miraculous term affixed to his days. "Apis cannot live more than a certain num-"ber of years; which ended, they drown "him in the fountain of the prieſts (*k*)." Ammianus Marcellinus adds, he is not permitted to live beyond the period which the ſacred books preſcribe; and, when this happens, they embalm, and, ſecretly, entomb him, in caverns deſtined for that purpoſe. The prieſts, in this caſe, proclaim he has diſappeared; but, when he dies, naturally, before this epocha, they publiſh his death, and ſolemnly bear his body to the temple of Serapis. "There was an ancient temple of "Serapis, at Memphis, which ſtrangers were "forbidden to approach; the prieſts them-"ſelves only entering when they entombed "Apis (*l*)"— "At this time, they opened "the gates called Lethe and Cocytus (or for-"getfulneſs and lamentation) which gave a "loud and grating ſound (*m*)."

(*k*) Plin. lib. 8.

(*l*) Pauſanias.

(*m*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride. Theſe gates were thoſe of the temple of Serapis.

Ammianus

Ammianus Marcellinus and Solinus deſcribe, with energy, the univerſal affliction of of the Egyptians, who called on Heaven, with cries and groans, for another Apis. Lucian repreſents it very pleaſantly. "Is "there any one, when Apis dies, ſufficiently "enamoured of his long hair not immedi-"ately to cut it off, and impreſs tokens of "his grief on his ſhaved pate?"

It is important to know the term preſcribed to the days of Apis, becauſe it will ſhew the intention of the prieſts in eſtabliſhing this ſymbolical deity; and Plutarch, here, affords us ſome information. "The "number five, multiplied by itſelf, is equal "to the letters of the Egyptian alphabet, "and the years of Apis (*n*)." You know, Sir, the number twenty five indicated a period of the Sun and Moon, to which this ox was conſecrated. Syncellus, in his Chronographia, ſpeaking of the thirty-ſecond Egyptian king, named Aſeth, ſays, "The ſolar year "contained only 360 days, before Aſeth, "who added five to make it compleat. In "his reign, a calf was raiſed to the rank of

(*n*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

"the

" the gods, and named Apis". The following paſſage yields us ſtill farther intelligence. " It was cuſtomary to inaugurate the Kings of " Egypt, at Memphis, in the temple of Apis, " where they were firſt initiated in the myſteries, " and received the religious garb, after which " they were permitted to bear the yoke of the " deity, through the town, to a place named " the Sanctuary, which the profane were " forbidden to enter. There they were " obliged to ſwear they would add neither " month nor day to the year, but that it " ſhould conſiſt of 365 days, according to an- " cient eſtabliſhment (*o*)."

This will authoriſe us to ſuppoſe Apis a tutelary deity of the new form given to the ſolar year, and of the cycle of twenty five years, diſcovered at the ſame time; nor may we doubt but that Apis intimately referred to the increaſe of the Nile, it being atteſted by many hiſtorians. The period of this increaſe was the new moon after the Summer ſolſtice, on which all eyes were fixed. Pliny ſays (*p*), Apis had a white mark, on the

(*o*) Fabricius Biblioth. Lat.

(*p*) Lib. 8.

right ſide, in the form of a creſcent; which mark, adds Ælian (*q*), ſignified the commencement of the inundation; which authorities are confirmed by Ammianus Marcellinus. If Apis poſſeſſed theſe characteriſtic ſigns, which proved his origin divine, fertility and abundance were promiſed. It, therefore, ſeems evident this ſacred ox, the guardian of the ſolar year, was alſo held to be the preſiding genius of the inundation. The prieſts, by limiting his life to twenty five years, and making the inſtallation of the new Apis concur with the renewal of this period, probably, had perceived, from long meteorological obſervations, this revolution continually brought years of abundance: no means could be more certain of obtaining reſpect from the people, toward this emblematic deity, ſince his birth promiſed a fortunate inundation, and all the treaſures of fecundity.

The ſolemnity of his inauguration was called *apparition*. That which was annually renewed, about the twelfth or thirteenth of the month Payn, correſponding to the ſeventeenth or eighteenth of June, was named the

(*q*) Hiſt. Animal. lib. 11.

birth of Apis, a feſtival which Ælian thus deſcribes. "What banquetting, what ſa-
"crifices, does the commencement of the
"inundation occaſion in Egypt! The people
"all celebrate the birth of Apis. To deſcribe
"the dances, rejoicing, ſhews, and feaſts,
"among the Egyptians, at this time, would
"be tedious; and to expreſs the intoxication
"of joy, throughout every city, impoſſi-
"ble (*r*)."

The name of this revered ox may add farther light to theſe remarks. *Api*, in Egyptian, ſignifies *number* (*s*) *meaſure*, which epithet is peculiarly characteriſtic of an animal deſigned to guard the ſolar year, to be the type of the cycle of twenty-five years, and the preſage of a favorable inundation (*t*).

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

(*r*) Ælian. Hiſt. Animal.

(*s*) Jablonſki Panth. Egypt. tom. II.

(*t*) The Biſhop of Avranches, M. Huet, has endeavoured to prove Apis was a ſymbol of the patriarch Joſeph, which opinion he has ſupported with all his erudition.

Seduced

LETTER XXXI.

OF MNEVIS AND ONUPHIS.

Mnevis and Onuphis ſacred bulls. The firſt worſhipped from antiquity too remote for the origin of this worſhip to be diſcovered; the ſecond, kept in the Temple of Apollo, at Hermunthis, was not very famous, if we may judge from the ſilence of hiſtorians; the celebrity of Apis occaſioned them both to be forgotten.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

MNEVIS and Onuphis were two bulls conſecrated to the Sun; the firſt was the tutelar deity of Heliopolis: the ſecond, kept in the temple of Apollo at Hermunthis, the

Seduced by authority ſo great, ſome authors have adopted this ſyſtem, which I have not thought neceſſary, ſeriouſly, to oppoſe, it being ſelf deſtructive, and only proving how far prejudice may lead the moſt learned man aſtray, who is not guided by ſound reaſon, and an impartial judgment.

modern

modern Armant, related to the increaſe of the Nile. "At the city of Heliopolis (*w*), "built on an artificial mount, was the "temple of the Sun, where Mnevis was "kept, in a ſacred incloſure, and held by "the citizens to be a god." The ancients concur in confirming this bull was conſecrated to the Sun (*x*); though the time of this conſecration is too remote to be known, being much more antient than that of Apis. M. de Vignoles (*y*) places it under Menes, the firſt of the Pharaohs; but this opinion, unſupported by hiſtory, muſt be regarded as conjecture. We have a right to ſuppoſe, however, it preceded the departure of the Iſraelites, who, accuſtomed to Egyptian idolatry, caſt a golden calf, in the deſert, to ſerve them as a guide. The worſhip of Mnevis declined when Apis, conſecrated to more important events, became the general deity; and Macrobius (*z*) informs us Mnevis held only the ſecond rank among the ſacred

(*w*) Strabo, lib. 17.

(*x*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1. Ælian Hiſt. Animal. lib. 11. Porphyr apud Euſeb. Præp. Evan. lib. 3.

(*y*) Chronologie, tom. II.

(*z*) Saturn. lib. 1.

bulls;

bulls; nor was any thing remarkable related of him, according to Ammianus Marcellinus (*a*).

We learn from Strabo (*b*), that Cambyſes, the ſcourge of Egypt, deſtroyed the ſtately temple of Heliopolis; after which, we may ſuppoſe, the worſhip of Mnevis fell to decay. Jablonſki interprets his name to ſignify dedicated to the Sun (*c*). At Hermunthis, where there was a Nilometer, a bull was worſhipped, called Onuphis (*d*), the good genius, becauſe he was honoured as the type of abundance. The prieſts kept him in the magnificent temple of Apollo, which I have deſcribed, in the fifth Letter of vol. II. At the farther end of one of the apartments are ſtill to be ſeen two marble oxen, ſurrounded by women ſuckling their children. Here, no doubt, they celebrated, in his honor, the cuſtomary feſtivals, at the birth of Apis; but this city was leſs conſiderable than Memphis, which became the Metropolis, after the Kings of Thebes had thither tranſported the ſeat of

(*a*) Lib. 22.
(*b*) Lib. 17.
(*c*) Tom. II. Deriving it from *Mnoein*.
(*d*) Jablon. Panth. Ægypt. tom. II.

empire.

empire. Onuphis was not ſo famous as Apis: this is the reaſon why he is not mentioned by the antients, except Strabo, Macrobius, and Ælian (*e*). Such, Sir, were the bulls the prieſts conſecrated to preſerve the memory of their diſcoveries, and which the vulgar adored as deities. The Egyptians, from the remoteſt ages, conſecrated the ox, as the ſymbol of fruitfulneſs; in which they were imitated by the Greeks. In after times, the horn, only, of that animal was depicted, filled with ears of corn, and fruits; and the cornucopia became emblematically famous among the poets. Thus have moſt ancient cuſtoms originated in Egypt.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*e*) Ælian Hiſt. Animal. lib. 12.

LETTER XXXII.

OF THE TERRESTRIAL SERAPIS.

The terreſtrial Serapis was a deity which, the Egyptians ſuppoſed, preſided over the increaſe of the waters. The Nilometer, divided into cubits, was his type, and a feſtival was held in his honour, when the inundation began. The prieſts took the Nilometer from the ſanctuary, at the increaſe of the waters, and there, again, incloſed it, at the decreaſe, which they named Sari Api, the column of meaſure. This was the origin of the emblematical deity the Greeks called Serapis.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Egyptians, Sir, had two deities named Serapis; the one celeſtial, of which I have ſpoken, the other terreſtrial, of which I ſhall now ſpeak. The firſt ſignified the Sun, in Autumn; the ſecond related to the inundation.

inundation. "The people of Egypt meaſure "the increaſe of the Nile by cubits (*f*)."—"Some authors affirm Serapis and Jupiter "are the ſame; others that he repreſents "the Nile, becauſe he bears a buſhel and a "cubit in his hand, emblems of the inunda-"tion (*g*)." Theſe different opinions were both right. The celeſtial Serapis, as an emblem of the Sun, might be called Jupiter; the other was ſuppoſed to preſide over the flooding of the river. Thus the rhetorician Ariſtides, in his oration on Serapis, calls him the god who, during Summer, makes the waters increaſe, and the tempeſts calm. On this point antient Pagan and Chriſtian authors agree. "To Serapis they attribute "that virtue in the Nile which imparts "riches and fertility to Egypt (*h*)."—"The Egyptians give the glory of watering "their fields to Serapis (*i*)."

Let us enquire what was the origin of this deity, which, perhaps, we may find, by

(*f*) Greg. Nazianzen. Orat. 9.
(*g*) Suidas in voce Serapis.
(*h*) Ruffin. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. lib. 2.
(*i*) Socrates. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. lib. 1.

collecting the ſcattered rays of light hiſtory affords. We have ſeen the Egyptians, ever attentive to what might aſcertain the progreſs of the inundation, conſtructed various Nilometers in different parts of the kingdom; as in the iſland of Elephantina, at Hermunthis (*k*), the modern Armant, Memphis, and as far as lower Egypt. They were, at firſt, ſatisfied with ſinking a chamber, the floor of which was on a level with the bed of the river, and tracing lines, on the walls, to meaſure the height of the water. They afterward raiſed a column in the centre of this chamber, which they divided into cubits and inches. This Nilometer they called Sari Api, the column of meaſure (*l*). This place became ſacred, and the prieſts, in whom all their ſcience centered, only might enter it, whoſe obſervations and diſcoveries, written in ſacerdotal characters, guided their ſucceſſors. Enlightened by meteorological tables, kept for ages with increaſing perfection,

(*k*) Deſcribed by Heliodorus, lib. 19.

(*l*) Thus are theſe Egyptian words interpreted by Jablonſki, tom. II. from which the Greeks have formed Serapis.

from this ſanctuary they predicted all the phænomena of the inundation, long before they happened. Poſſeſſors of this important knowledge, they announced abundance or ſterility, and were regarded by the people as oracles. That their prognoſtications might be more revered, they attributed them to Serapis, under whoſe divine protection they put the column of meaſure. Knowing the vulgar require ſenſible images, they formed a Nilometer of wood, which was the emblem of Serapis, and to which they attributed divine virtue: this they ſolemnly bore at the feaſts of Apis. "It was the cuſtom to carry "the meaſure of the Nile into the temple of "Serapis, as the author of the inundation; "which Nilometer was, afterward, depoſited "in the church, to render homage to the "Lord of waters (*m*)." Sozomen adds, this change happened under the reign of Conſtantine (*n*), after which the meaſure of the increaſe of the river was no more borne into the Pagan temples, but placed in the

(*m*) Ruffin. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. lib. 2.
(*n*) Sozomen. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. lib. 1.

churches. Julian (o), the Apoſtate, re-eſtabliſhed things in their former ſtate, but Theodoſius deſtroyed the magnificent temple of Serapis, at Alexandria, and aboliſhed this ſuperſtitious ceremony. Theſe authors, and many more whom, were it needful, I might cite, prove the Egyptian prieſts firſt called the Nilometer Serapis, the column of meaſure, which name they gave to the god under whoſe protection they placed it, and to whom they attributed a power of making the waters increaſe, and the ſymbol of whom they, afterward, bore in their ſolemn feaſts; thus abuſing their knowledge to the encouragement of idolatry, and to render themſelves reſpectable in the eyes of the people.

An Alexandrian coin is preſerved, on one ſide of which the Nile reclines, depicted as an aged man, bearing a buſhel on his head, and holding a cornucopia in one hand, and, in the other, a ſlip of the papyrus, with this inſcription, *To the Nile, Holy God*; on the reverſe is the head of Serapis, bearing a buſhel, and this legend, *To Serapis, Holy God (p *)*.

(o) Sozomen. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. lib. 4.

(p*) Pignorii Menſa Iſiaca.

I ſhall

I ſhall not, like Jablonſki, dwell on the ſituation of the antient temple of Serapis, which appears to me of little conſequence, but ſhall juſt obſerve, Sir, this learned man, to whom I render homage, and whoſe moſt eſtimable enquiries have aided me greatly, is deceived, when he places this edifice in the iſle of Raouda, where the preſent Mekias is ſituated, the only remaining one of the numerous Nilometers of Egypt. I might ſend you a long diſſertation on this ſubject, and add to the knowledge of the place the teſtimony of the antients, but I fear to abuſe your patience; my purpoſe was to diſcover the origin of the terreſtrial Serapis, which I believe I have accompliſhed.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXXIII.

OF ANUBIS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY.

Anubis had temples, prieſts, and a city built in his honour: his ſtatue bore a dog's head, which animal, his living image, was conſecrated to him: repreſented the Horizon, wherefore, was held to be the inſeparable companion of Iſis and Oſiris, and called their illegitimate ſon; becauſe, not luminous himſelf, he ſhone only with borrowed light.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

ANUBIS, regarded in Egypt as the faithful companion of Iſis and Oſiris, received divine honours, had temples conſecrated to him, and prieſts, and his image was borne in all religious ceremonies. Lucian makes Socrates ſay, "See you not with what reſpect "the Egyptians adore the god Anubis?" His ſtatue was emblematic, having the head of

of a dog, on a human body (*p*); wherefore Virgil and Ovid call him the barker Anubis (*q*). Lucian, whoſe wit is exerciſed on all ſubjects that fall beneath his notice, and who, in his ſarcaſms, ſpared neither heroes nor gods, makes Momus ſpeak thus: "Oh "thou, whom Egypt repreſents with the "head of a dog, ſpeak, who art thou? "And, ſince thou barkeſt, wherefore haſt "thou ſuffered them to place thee among "the immortals?"

Cynopolis (*r*), now Minieh, ſituated in the lower Thebais, was built in honour of Anubis. His temple no longer ſubſiſts, where the prieſts celebrated his feſtivals with great pomp, and conſecrated the dog to him, as his living emblem. "Anubis is revered in "the city of the dogs, the capital of the "Cynopolitan Præfecture, where thoſe ani-"mals are fed with ſacred food, and religion "has appointed them worſhip (*s*)." An event, related by Plutarch, ſomewhat, how-

(*p*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

(*q*) Æneid. lib. 8. Metamorph. lib. 9.

(*r*) The city of the dog.

(*s*) Strabo, lib. 17. Stephanus Byzantinus adds Cynopolis is a city of Egypt, where Anubis is adored.

ever,

ever, diſcredited them in the minds of the people. Cambyſes having killed the god Apis, and caſt his body in a field, all animals reſpected him, except the dog, which eat his fleſh: this impiety diminiſhed the veneration in which dogs had been held.

Cynopolis was not the only city that burnt incenſe on the altars of Anubis; he had chapels in moſt of the temples, which occaſioned Juvenal to ſay, how many cities venerate the dog (*t*). His image always accompanied thoſe of Iſis and Oſiris, in their ſolemn feaſts, and, Rome having adopted the ceremonies of Egypt, the Emperor Commodus (*u*), celebrating the Iſiac feſtivals, had his head ſhaved, and bore, himſelf, the god Anubis. His ſtatue was of gold, or gilt, as well as the accompanying emblematic attributes. In this the antients agree, and Lucian, relating the crime committed by a Syrian ſlave, confirms their opinion: this ſlave, ſays he, joined ſome ſacrilegious robbers, who, entering the ſanctuary of Anubis, ſtole the god, two vaſes, and the golden caduceus, with cynocephali of ſilver. The very name

(*t*) Sat. 15.

(*u*) Lamprid. cap. 9. Spartian cites the ſame fact.

of

of Anubis ſignifies gilded (*x*). It was myſterious, and the prieſts, as we ſhall ſee, did not beſtow it without a reaſon.

Plutarch will inform us what this emblematical deity meant. "The circle which "bounds and divides the two hemiſpheres, "and, therefore, is called horizon, is named "Anubis, and is pictured in the form of a "dog becauſe that animal watches day and "night." (*y*) Clemens Alexandrinus, well inſtructed in the myſtical theology of Egypt, favours this explanation. "The two dogs "(the two Anubis) are ſymbols of the two "hemiſpheres, which ſurround the terreſ-"trial globe" (*z*). In another place, he adds, ſome pretend that theſe animals, the faithful guardians of men, are types of the tropics, which, like centinels, watch the ſun on the north and ſouth.

If, Sir, we adopt the firſt of theſe interpretations, we ſhall find the prieſts, regarding Anubis as the horizon, gilded his ſtatue to

(*x*) Jablonſki Panth. Ægypt. tom. II. ſays Anubis comes from Nub, *gold*, and from Annub, *gilded*, whence the Greeks have derived Anubis.

(*y*) De Iſide et Oſiride.

(*z*) Stroma 5.

indicate

indicate that this circle, firſt receiving the ſun's rays, ſeemed, at his riſing, glittering with brightneſs, and, when he ſet, reflected his laſt beams upon the earth. They called Anubis the ſon of Oſiris, but illegitimate, in their ſacred fables, for he only returned a borrowed light to the earth, and might not, like Horus, be regarded as the father of day, or the lawful ſon of Oſiris. We may add, the viſible horizon turning with the ſun is his inſeparable companion.

According to the ſecond of theſe explanations, where Anubis means the tropics, he is alſo the faithful guardian of Iſis and Oſiris. The courſe of the ſun and moon is included within the Zodiack, wandering neither to the right nor left; which limits, fixed by the author of nature, might, in hieroglyphical language, be typified by a deity with the head of a dog, which ſhould ſeem to oppoſe their paſſage toward the two poles. The firſt opinion, however, ſeems to me moſt natural, and accordant to the ideas of the prieſts.

You perceive, Sir, thoſe authors who have been pleaſant upon the Egyptians either did not ſpeak what they thought, or underſtood not

not their allegories. Anubis, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, was, at firſt, only a ſymbol, invented by aſtronomers to expreſs their diſcoveries. The people, accuſtomed to ſee it in their temples, where ſcience was depoſited, adored it as a deity; and the prieſts favoured their error by connecting it with religion. The worſhip of Anubis induced that of the dog, his type, and moſt of the Pagan gods, had this kind of origin. Before men could write they uſed imitative figures to expreſs their ideas, which language was, at firſt, intelligible to all. Having invented characters which by ſound might expreſs thought, the people employed theſe becauſe they might be uſed with more facility. The hieroglyphics were conſigned to their ſanctuaries, and the prieſts only preſerved their interpretation. Theſe allegorical ſigns, at length, no more had meaning, in the vulgar apprehenſion, but, containing the forms of things, became objects of ſuperſtition.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIV.

OF TYPHON, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY.

Typhon, an evil genius; the crocodile and hippopotamus conſecrated to him; his ſtatue inſulted when thoſe evils did not ceaſe of which he was the ſuppoſed author. The prieſts by this god figured winter, and the fatal effects of the South and South Eaſt winds. Their fables concerning Typhon paſſed into Phœnicia, Greece, and Italy; the philoſophers and poets of which nations, adding new allegories, introduced his worſhip. His origin diſcoverable amid theſe fables.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I HAVE mentioned Typhon before, Sir, becauſe his hiſtory is connected with that of all the gods of Egypt. Hitherto you have beheld beneficent deities worſhipped, and animals conſecrated to the ſun, the moon, and the Nile. Gratitude rendered this homage,

but the adoration of Typhon was the effect of fear. Thankſgivings and offerings were appointed for the former; this evil genius was to be pacified by ſacrifices; and, when thoſe calamities which were attributed to him did not ceaſe, his image was inſulted. Believing Typhon to be the evil principle, the Egyptians conſecrated the crocodile (*a*) to him, the hippopotamus, and the aſs, becauſe of its red colour. Theſe animals, ſuppoſed to be agreeable to him, were revered in many cities, and kept in ſacred incloſures, they imagining ſuch religious attentions would calm the fury of Typhon, whoſe ſoul was ſuppoſed to animate them. "The Egyptians endeavoured to appeaſe this evil genius by ſacrifices (*b*)". When unſucceſsful, at certain feſtivals, they loaded him with opprobrious epithets and invectives, and ſtruck his ſtatue. "When any extraordinary heats "(*c*) which occaſioned peſtilential diſeaſes or

(*a*) Plutarch de Iſide et Oſiride. Herod. lib. 2.

(*b*) Plutarch ubi. ſup. Herodotus, in confirmation, ſays, crocodiles, conſecrated to Typhon, were worſhipped in certain cities, the Egyptians being perſuaded they were animated by his ſoul. Lib. 2.

(*c*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

"other

" other calamities happened, the prieſts took " ſome of the animals dedicated to him into " a dark place, where, by menaces, they " firſt endeavoured to terrify them; and, if " the contagion did not ceaſe, ſacrificed them " to public vengeance".

The purport of theſe ceremonies was, evidently, to calm the people's fears, and revive their hopes. While they were performing, the ills occaſioned by the peſtiferous South winds might ceaſe, and the nation, ſuppoſing Typhon appeaſed by ſacrifices, or intimidated by threats and outrages, would attribute all the glory to the prieſts.

The word Typhon, according to Jablonſki (*d*), is derived from *Theu*, wind, and *Phou*, pernicious, which interpretation is confirmed by the moſt ancient authors. " A violently " ſcorching wind is called Typhon *(e)*." Euſtathius interprets it a burning wind *(f)*; and Euripides employs the word to expreſs a ſcorching whirlwind (*g*). The ancient Egyptians,

(*d*) Panth. Egypt. tom. III.

(*e*) Heſychius.

(*f*) Comment. in Iliad.

(*g*) Euripid. Phœniſſæ. This ſame wind is called burning by Job, chap. 27, breath of fire by the Greeks, Eurus by

tians, to characteriſe its violence, called it *Apoh*, giant.

In the courſe of theſe letters, I have, more than once, mentioned its deſtructive effect; but, however ſtrong my expreſſions they are ſtill ſhort of the truth. The heavens darkened by duſt, which burns the eyes, ſcorches the entrails, and veils the face of the ſun; caravans ſtifled in the deſart; tribes of Arabs extinct in a ſingle day; ſandy rain ſometimes covering the whole ſurface of Egypt, and forming hills which, rolling from the deſert, threaten to overwhelm and bury all living creatures: ſuch are the deſtructive powers of the giant Typhon. I have read of a tempeſt (*b*), from the South, which continued three days and three nights, till the utter ruin of Egypt was apprehended; had it not abated this fine country would have become a fearful wilderneſs. The prieſts, to expreſs the fury of Typhon, in their allegoric language ſay, he was not born, after the manner of Oſiris

by the Latins, *Sem*, poiſon, by the Arabs, and by the modern Egyptians, *Meriſi*, wind of noon, or, more generally, Khamſin.

(*b*) Elmacin Hiſt. Saracen.

and Horus, but having torn his mother's ſide eſcaped through the opening (*i*).

Herodotus (*k*) thus deſcribes two ſtatues which, in his time, ſtood in the temple of Vulcan, at Memphis. "The one, facing "the North, named Summer, is adored by "the Egyptians, and ſurrounded by marks "of their reſpect, and gratitude. The other, "turned Southward, and called Winter, is "very differently treated." The latter is what they whipped with rods, on certain occaſions, it repreſenting Typhon. The South wind begins to be felt, in the month of February, and cauſes the evils I have mentioned; the Eteſian winds prevail in Summer, purify the air, and produce the moſt happy effects. Hence we may ſatisfactorily explain the ſacred fable of the prieſts, relative to Typhon, which I have, in part, repeated. Plutarch gives it at length, but the leading traits will be here ſufficient.

Oſiris (*l*) aſcended the throne of Egypt, reigned glorioufly, and became celebrated for his beneficence and juſtice. Travelling the

(*i*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

(*k*) Lib. 2.

(*l*) Plut. ubi ſupra.

world

world to do good to men, his brother Typhon, for ſome time, durſt undertake nothing againſt his intereſts, becauſe Iſis was watchful for the ſafety of the kingdom; but, when Oſiris returned from Ethiopia, Typhon, with ſeventy-two conſpirators, incloſed his body in a wooden coffer, and threw it into the Nile. It deſcended into the Mediterranean, by the Tanitic branch, and was found on the coaſt of Phenicia, by Iſis, and brought back into Egypt: but the uſurper, perceiving it by night, the moon being at the full, as he hunted the boar, broke it, divided the body into fourteen parts, and ſcattered the members over the country. Iſis collected and carefully preſerved them (*m*). Typhon, delivered from his enemies, exerciſed tyrannical power over Egypt, and, to make the crown ſure, endeavoured to kill Horus, the ſon of Oſiris, for whom he moſt carefully ſought; but Latona, hiding and educating him, at Butis, ſaved him from his purſuers, and, becoming ſtrong, he declared war againſt his father's murderer, and vanquiſhed

(*m*) Except the privities, which, thrown into the river, were devoured by the fiſh Lepidotus, the Phagrus, and the Oxyrynchus. Perhaps this trait is added to denote the prodigious fecundity of theſe fiſh, which became ſacred.

and gave him in charge to his mother, loaded with chains. Iſis ſet him at liberty, and Horus, in his anger, took away her crown, combated the tyrant again, and, after conquering him a ſecond time, reigned in peace and glory.

A few remarks will ſuffice to explain this fable, which, in part, explains itſelf. Oſiris is the general name of the ſun, which beſtows its benefits over the whole earth, and particularly, manifeſts its power in Egypt. His return from Ethiopia ſignifies the time when, coming from the tropic of Capricorn, he once more proceeds toward the equator, and paſſes through the Winter ſigns; during which ſeaſon the South wind predominates. The ſeventy-two conſpirators *(n)* ſignify the days during which it uſually blows. This epocha is the death of Oſiris and the triumph

(*n*) The time when the South wind is moſt uſual, at preſent, is called Khamſin, or fifty, but neither this number, nor ſeventy-two preciſely mark its duration, that being variable. This period therefore may be denoted by the neareſt number, and ſeventy-two appears to me the moſt exact. I have before obſerved this wind rarely continues blowing more than three days together, otherwiſe it would render Egypt uninhabitable.

of

of Typhon. Horus, educated near the lake Butis, according to the Egyptians, depicted the ſun attracting beneficent vapours to return them back in dews: his increaſing ſtrength and victory over the tyrant indicate his entrance into the Summer ſigns; and the Eteſian winds, which begin to repel the South ſtorms. Typhon, releaſed by Iſis, informs us this evil returns, ſometimes, towards the end of June, eſpecially at the full of the moon *(o)*. But the ſun, being come to the tropic of Cancer, the North wind recovers its power, refreſhes the air, expels contagion, drives the clouds towards the high ſummits of the Abyſſinian mountains, and ſwells the Nile by the rains which, thence, deſcend in torrents. This is the glorious reign of Horus.

(*o*) I have ſeen terrible examples of this, becauſe the South winds drive back the clouds, toward the North, which ſhould occaſion the overflowing of the river, and the country is in danger of barrenneſs. As this oftenеſt happens during the full moon, the prieſts ſay Horus, in wrath againſt Iſis for having ſet Typhon at liberty, takes away her crown, and is obliged to combat the tyrant anew, over whom he remains victor: that is to ſay, the moon in conjunction, and journeying by day, with the ſun, has loſt her light; and the North wind then gains the aſcendant.

The Greeks, diſciples of the Egyptians, eagerly adopted theſe allegories, in their Theogony; gave them their colouring, and added new fables. Some changed the name of Typhon into Typhoeus; others retained the antient appellation. Heſiod, in his Theogony, deſcribes him with a hundred dragons heads, projecting from his ſhoulders. Pindar, in his firſt ode, ſays he was buried under Mount Etna, whence he diſcharged his fires. Apollodorus, who lived one hundred and forty years before Chriſt, deſcribes him thus. "The enormous giant Typhon, foaming "with wrath, and bellowing, caſts burning "rocks toward heaven, and vomits torrents "of flames. The gods, beholding him "ready to ſcale Olympus, fled, terrified, "and eſcaped into Egypt, where, purſued by "their enemy, they concealed themſelves "under the forms of animals; but Ju-"piter, perceiving Typhon afar off, ſtruck "him with thunder, and buried him under "Mount Etna". Hyginus, in his fables, adds, the mountain hath ever ſince ſent forth flames. The Latins ſucceeded, and imitated their predeceſſors. Ovid thus relates the gi-

ants war. "Typhoeus, ſprung from the "earth's entrails, terrified the heavens, and "forced the immortals to fly. Egypt, and "the ſhores of the Nile, famous for its "ſeven mouths, gave them aſylum. The "dreadful ſons of the earth followed, to eſ-"cape whoſe fury they were obliged to ſuffer "a metamorphoſis. Jupiter became a ſhep-"herd, wherefore his ſtatue is ſtill repreſented "with horns *(p)*, Apollo a crow, Bacchus "a goat, Iſis a cat, Juno a white cow, Venus "a fiſh, and Mercury an ibis *(q*)*."

This truth, wandering from its original ſource, and paſſing from one nation to another, becomes obſcure, and ſcarely to be diſcovered, and thus ſucceeding poets, employing the ſame fables to decorate their verſe, adopt words the ſenſe of which they do not underſtand. The Greeks and Latins evidently, however, were deſirous of explaining the adoration paid to various animals in Egypt, and feigned the gods aſſumed their forms to eſcape the purſuit of Typhon. This error

(*p*) It is not neceſſary, here, to note, how far the Latin poet departs from truth. The ſtatue of Ammon is repreſented with horns, becauſe this ſymbolical deity denoted the ſun in the ſign of the ram.

(*q**) Ovid. Metam. lib. 5.

has lately been revived by the learned Warburton, but is not, therefore, more credited. Herodotus and the ancients wrote nothing like this. Hyginus, in his fables, on the contrary, affirms, "The Egyptians ſuffered "no violence to be done to animals, be- "cauſe they held them to be the image of the gods." They conſecrated them, either in gratitude for benefits received, or to preſerve the memory of important diſcoveries, and honoured them as the living types of their deities.

The prieſts relate the tragical death of Typhon very differently, whom they drown in the waters of a peſtilential lake. "The "lake Sirbon, in which Typhon is ſaid to "be buried, is near Peluſium *(q)*" and, according to Plutarch *(r)*, the Egyptians called it the breath of Typhon. This lake, and its vapours, ſo injurious to the ſalubrity of Peluſium, is now no more to be found; as well as many others, it is filled up with ſand.

The fable of Adonis ſeems to have been imitated from that of Oſiris. Macrobius who, with wonderful ſagacity, has explained

(q) Euſtath. Comment. in Dionyſ. Perieget.
(r) De Iſide et Oſiride.

the

the myſteries of ancient religions, ſays,—At-
" tentively conſidering the Aſſyrian religion,
" we cannot doubt but that Adonis ſignifies
" the ſun. Philoſophers have called the up-
" per hemiſphere, a part of which we in-
" habit, Venus. Regarding the boar as the
" ſymbol of Winter, becauſe he loves marſhy
" and frozen places, they figured this animal
" to have killed Adonis. Winter, there-
" fore, which diminiſhes light, and the ſun's
" heat, is the wound of Adonis *(s)*". I need not point out the reſemblance between this fable and that of the Egyptians. Winter, in both, makes the country deſolate, and cauſes the ſun's death. This myſterious language is embelliſhed by the Greeks, whoſe poetry, full of grace, nature, and feeling, harmoniouſly ſings the grief of Venus for her lover. Thus we perceive how an allegory, under the veil of which the phænomena of nature are deſcribed, is metamorphoſed in paſſing from Egypt to Phœnicia, Greece, and Rome: but, collecting hints from the antients, with judgment, we again diſcover it, nearly, as it was firſt invented.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(s) Saturnal. lib. 1.

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

OF NEPHTHYS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY.

Nephthys, the barren wife of Typhon, having commerce with Oſiris, became fruitful: ſignified the ſandy plains, which lay between the Nile and the Red Sea, and are greatly expoſed to the South Eaſt winds. The adultery of Oſiris with Nephthys denoted the years when a high flood occaſioned the waters to extend ſo far. Thueri, or Aſo, Queen of Ethiopia, the ſuppoſed concubine of Typhon, denoted the South-wind, which joining the Eaſt, formed the South Eaſt, dreaded by the Egyptians for its parching quality, and the torrents of ſand it drove over Egypt.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE prieſts of Egypt, continuing their allegory, gave Typhon a wife, named Nephthys (*t*), the ſiſter and rival of Iſis; ſhe was ſtruck with barreneſs, and only became fruit-

(*t*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

ful

ful when Oſiris, deceived by appearances, had commerce with her. The crown of Lotus, which adorned the god, and which he, forgetting, left with Nephthys, diſcovered his crime. Such is their fable, relative to the wife of Typhon, which we will endeavour to explain.

You recollect, Sir, the Nile was ſometimes called Oſiris; and Iſis, under certain circumſtances, ſignified the plain it inundated: wherefore this goddeſs was called his lawful wife; and the inundation, in ſacerdotal language, their marriage. When the river, in years of extraordinary fertility, overflowed the hills by which it was bounded, Eaſtward, and ſpread over the deſarts, it made them fruitful, and the ſands were covered with the verdure of plants, the moſt remarkable of which was the Lotus. Here is the crown which betrayed the adultery of Oſiris. "The "Egyptians (*u*) gave the confines of their "kingdom, toward the ſea, the name of "Nephthys. When the Nile extends that "far, they call it the commerce of Oſiris

(*u*) Plut. ubi ſupra.

"with

" with Nephthys, which is announced by " the Lotus growing amid the ſands." The characteriſtic word Nephthys, *the country expoſed to the winds*, (*x*) unveils the natural ſenſe which the prieſts concealed in fable. All that part of Egypt, from the Nile to the Red Sea, and from Syene to the Mediterranean, not defended by mountains, is greatly expoſed to the South-Eaſt winds, and, therefore, allegorically, called the barren wife of Typhon, who there wantons at will, and rolls the ſands of thoſe vaſt ſolitudes over the plains of Egypt.

This evil genius had a concubine, not leſs dangerous, named Thueri, or Aſo, Queen of Ethiopia *(y)*. When Oſiris returned from his travels, Typhon, as I have ſaid, inſnared him, aided by ſeventy two conſpirators, and Queen Aſo. " The Queen Aſo, who aſſiſted " Typhon, means the South wind; coming

(*x*) From Neph and Theu, Egyptian words, Jablonſki Panth. Egypt. Tom II.

(y) Thueri comes from *Thures*, South wind, Aſo, in the ancient Thebaic dialect, ſignified Ethiopia: thus the Queen Aſo is the wind moſt uſual in Ethiopia, that is the South. Jab. Panth. Egypt. Tom III.

" from Ethiopia. If that repels the eteſian " winds, which drive the clouds over that " burning country, it prevents the rain which " produces the increaſe of the Nile; and the " ſcorching breath of victorious Typhon de- " vours the fields" *(z)*. Such is the allegory the prieſts invented concerning the wife and concubine of Typhon, the one repreſenting the ſandy deſarts which ſeem abandoned to the fury of the Eaſt winds, and the other the ſtorms of the South. When the two winds united *(a)*, Typhon came, accompanied by Nephthys, and Aſo; dethroned Oſiris, and brought deſolation into the rich valley which the Nile waters. Theſe allegoric perſonages, we perceive, were invented in theſe early ages, when men were in need of ſenſible images to make themſelves underſtood. Homer, the poet neareſt this antiquity, often expreſſes himſelf like the prieſts of

(*z*) Plut. de Iſide et Oſiride.

(*a*) The South and Eaſt winds, blowing both at once, form the South Eaſt, which the Egyptians dread moſt; it being moſt parching, and driving the greateſt quantity of ſands. The moment it begins the thermometer riſes to above 33 degrees, and, if it continues, to above 36.

Thebes

Thebes and Memphis. Typhon, Nephthys, and Aſo are now forgotten in Egypt; but the ſame winds, known under the general name of Khamſin, continue to occaſion the ſame evils, and to deſolate this land of delights.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

OF CANOBUS, A PRETENDED EGYPTIAN GOD.

Canobus, called by the writers of the lower empire Canopus, was the pilot of Menelaus, who died on the Egyptian ſhore, where his tomb was built: the place called in Egyptian Cahi Noub, Land of Gold. A City and Temples built there. Deceived by the name Canobus, the Greeks ſaid they were built in honour of him. Ruffinus, in a long fable, pretends to prove the deity adored in the temple of Canobus was a pitcher, which was merely an offering to the god of the Nile.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

CANOBUS became famous under the Ptolemies. It is important, therefore, to enquire what was its origin, why it has been deified by hiſtorians, and what it ſignified, according

according to the Egyptians. Various writers of Greece and Italy, ſpeaking after Homer and Hecatæus, make Menelaus land in Egypt, and ſay that Canobus, his pilot, dying of the bite of a viper, had a temple erected to his memory, on the ſhore. This fact is too well ſupported to be queſtioned: they add that the city of Canobus *(b)* was afterward built here, in honour of this pilot. Dionyſius Periegetes, ſpeaking after them, but going beyond them, ſays, in the moſt northern bay of Egypt, is the famous temple of the Spartan Canobus. It would be aſtoniſhing, Sir, had the Egyptians, who, as the Scripture informs us, held ſtrangers in extreme averſion (Geneſis, chap. XLIII), raiſed a Greek pilot to the rank of the gods, when we know they never granted that honour to any mortal. Herodotus, who lived many years among the prieſts of Heliopolis and Memphis, learned from them that Menelaus, after receiving Helen from King Proteus, rewarded the ſervice by depredations, and pillaged the ſea

(b) In other parts of this work I have called it Canopus, in conformity to modern uſe, but the true name is Canobus.

coaſts

coaſts before he ſet ſail *(c)*: nor does he mention Canobus. Is it credible that ſuch ingratitude would have occaſioned the Apotheoſis of his pilot, contrary, alſo, to the manners and religion of the Egyptians? Let us not believe this improbable opinion of Dionyſius Periegetes, who is the only profane writer who grants the honours of a temple to the Spartan.

There were ſeveral temples at Canobus *(d)*, the moſt famous was that of Serapis, the moſt ancient that of Hercules, built in one of the ſuburbs *(e)*, which are all antiquity mentions. Strabo *(f)* deſcribes the temple of Serapis, adorned by the Ptolemies with royal magnificence. They added various

(*c*) We cannot doubt the teſtimony of Herodotus, who, being a Greek, would not have invented a lye injurious to his nation, before whom he read his hiſtory; the fact muſt be well known in his time, and the love of truth only could render it ſupportable.

(*d*) Ammianus Marcellinus. lib. 22.

(*e*) Herod. lib. 2.

(*f*) Lib. 17. See Letter III. Vol. I. in which I have deſcribed, after Strabo, the ceremonies practiſed here, and the concourſe of people who come from Alexandria, and all parts of Egypt.

edifices in which an academy was formed, where the Belle Lettres, and, particularly, the myſteries of religion and the ancient language of Egypt were taught. Many of the learned flouriſhed here; and Ptolemy (the geographer) rendered it famous. "He paſſed "forty years in the temple of Canobus, "during which he ſtudied Aſtronomy. His "ſyſtem and diſcoveries are there engraved "on columns *(g)*." Serapis was the tutelar deity, and his worſhip, encouraged by the Ptolemies, was propagated in Greece. Pauſanias *(h)*, travelling this fine country, ſaw, in the citadel of Corinth, a temple dedicated to the Canobic Serapis. The ſciences, and the Pythagorean and Platonic Philoſophy, were, for ages, cultivated at Canobus; but Theodoſius, having deſtroyed its colleges and temples, a part of human learning was buried under their ruins, and the learned diſperſed.

Ariſtides, the rhetorician, deſirous of knowing the origin of the name Canobus, queſtioned an Egyptian prieſt, and gives the following account. "I was informed, by

(*g*) Olympiodori Comment.
(*h*) In Corinthiacis.

"a prieſt,

" a prieſt, eminent in his order, that, long " before Menelaus landed, this place was " called Canobus. He demonſtrated this " word could not be properly written with " Greek characters, and that it ſignified " Land of Gold."—" We may well ſuppoſe," adds Ariſtides, " the Egyptians knew their " own hiſtory better than Homer and Heca- " tæus." M. de la Croix *(i)* confirms this teſtimony. The remains of the Coptic language leave no room to doubt the fidelity of this account; Cahi, a word which, becauſe of its aſpiration, could not be written in Greek, ſignified land; and Noub, gold.

The Greeks, knowing that moſt cities of Egypt bore the name of the deities they adored, and that the tomb of Canobus was in a place called Cahinoub, deceived, no doubt, by the ſimilarity of ſound, have affirmed this city was built in honour of him, and Dionyſius Periegetes has dedicated a temple to him, it is eaſy to perceive with what truth. The primitive Chriſtians, delighting to ridicule Pagan idolatry, have

(*i*) Diſſertation Philologique.

endeavoured to give this error credit. "Canobus *(k)* and his wife Eumenouth, were "buried on the ſea ſhore, twelve miles from "Alexandria *(l)*, and honoured with divine "worſhip." Epiphanius is the firſt author who hazarded this aſſertion. Ruffinus is more prolix; and, in his uſual ſtyle, farther from truth. "How ſhall we deſcribe *(m)* "the crimes of ſuperſtition at Canobus, "where, pretending to ſtudy the ſacerdotal "letters (the ancient Egyptian language was "ſo called) they publicly profeſſed magic! "This place, which may be called the "ſource of demons, became more celebrated, "among the Pagans, than Alexandria itſelf; "nor will it be unſeaſonable to reveal the "origin of theſe monſtrous errors. The "Chaldæans were ſaid to tranſport the fire, "their god, throughout the provinces; de-"fying the gods of other nations to combat, "on condition, if he was victor, he ſhould be "adored. The prieſt of Canobus accepted

(*k*) Epiphan. tom. II.

(*l*) The exact diſtance from Alexandria to Aboukir, formerly Canobus.

(*m*) Ruffin. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. lib. 2.

"the

" the challenge, and imagined the following " trick. Earthen pitchers are made in " Egypt, the ſubſtance of which is extremely " porous, and the water filters through it, " and purifies itſelf. Taking one of theſe, " he cloſed the pores with wax, and, painting " various figures on it, filled it with water, " and called it his god; placing on its top " the head of an ancient ſtatue, ſaid to be " that of the pilot of Menelaus. The Chal- " dæans came, the combat began, fire was " lighted around the pitcher, the wax melted, " the water ran through the pores, and ex- " tinguiſhed the fire. The fraud of the " prieſt made the god of Canobus victor, " and his image has ever ſince been repre- " ſented with ſhort feet, a narrow neck, a " belly and back round, like a pitcher, and " in this form is adored as the conqueror of " all gods."

I know not where Ruffinus found this fable, for he cites no authorities; but it is too puerile to need refutation. It plainly contradicts the worſhip of the Egyptians, who never adored water. Had this combat really happened, Clemens Alexandrinus, who was better acquainted with the religion of Alex-

andria than the prieſts of Aquileia, would not have forgotten it; but this tale may lead to the diſcovery of ſome truth. The Egyptians, from the remoteſt ages, have fabricated precious earthen veſſels, through which the water is filtered and clarified; the Greeks called them Βαυκαλιον, the Arabs Bardak. This was an intereſting invention, where, during five months of the year, the Nile is defiled by ſand, mud, and inſects. The water, before it is drank, is left to ſettle in large jars, into which the powder of pounded almonds is thrown, and the heterogeneous particles ſink, in a few hours; but, to render it more agreeable, it is expoſed to the north wind, at the window, in Bardaks. It oozes through the pores, and, being continually ripled by the refreſhing breath of the north, it contracts a coolneſs moſt delicious in a climate ſo ſultry. Poor and rich drink, with a kind of voluptuouſneſs, water which has been in theſe vaſes. The art of making them was, therefore, a precious diſcovery for Egypt. The ancients, who made this diſcovery, felt its importance, and, as a mark of gratitude to the god of the Nile, conſecrated one of theſe pitchers, in the temple of Serapis,

Serapis, at Canobus. This offering Ruffinus, aſſiſted by fable, endeavours to paſs for a god. There are various proofs of what I advance. A coin, ſtruck in the time of Adrian, by the inhabitants of Canobus, bears one of theſe vaſes, with a ſerpent wound round the mouth *(n)*. This figure is known to be the emblem of Cneph, the good genius, and, in a more extenſive ſenſe, the Author of Nature. A canal, which is cut from the river, and falls into the ſea, near Canobus, was called Agathodaimon *(o)*, the Good Genius, doubtleſs, becauſe it approached a city where the people worſhipped Serapis, and the prieſts the Supreme Being. It is natural to ſuppoſe, therefore, the pitcher depoſited in his temple was merely a mark of homage to his beneficence *(p)*: like conſecrations are found in many of the Egyptian monuments. The

(*n*) Cotelerii Monumenta, tom. I.

(*o*) Ptol. Geograph.

(*p*) Among the curioſities which M. Dombei, who has travelled South-America nine years, brought to France, I remarked vaſes, taken from the tombs of the Peruvians, very ſimilar to thoſe found in the caverns of Saccara; and golden idols, like what the Arabs get from the mummies, which their cupidity induces them to ſearch and deſtroy.

ſacrifice, engraved on the rock near Babain, to Jupiter Ammon, or the Sun of Spring, has ſeven vaſes of this kind, which bear the three piles on which the immolated lambs lye. Obeliſks were ſymbols of the Sun's rays, and their ſhadows indicated his courſe while above the horizon. Theſe facts all atteſt the Egyptians carefully conſecrated their inventions to the gods. The name Cahinoub, Land of Gold, beſtowed on the country the clay of which was the propereſt for the compoſition of the pitchers through which the water was filtered, teaches us with what reaſon the prieſts offered one to the gods, in the very place where they were fabricated, and where, perhaps, they had been invented.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVII.

OF THOTH, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY.

Thoth held to be a famous and extraordinary man, by many writers, who attributed to him the invention of all arts, ſciences, and human inſtitutions, and called him Triſmegiſtus, thrice Great. This demonſtrates the perſonage to be allegoric. Thoth ſignifies column, in Egyptian, and approved works, being engraved on columns, were all, generally, called Thoth. The three Thoths, or Mercuries, may indicate the birth, progreſs, and perfection of human knowledge.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

HAVING given ſome account of the principal Egyptian deities, I ſhall next ſpeak of Thoth, or the famous perſonage who received the homage of antiquity, and was held to be the inventor of almoſt all human ſcience.

ſcience. His exiſtence is placed in ages ſo diſtant, that it is next to impoſſible to obtain information on ſubjects ſo concealed by the darkneſs of time. Plato, who wrote two thouſand years ago, and had been inſtructed in the prieſt's ſchool, at Heliopolis, knew not himſelf what judgment to form of Thoth, then too antient to diſcover his origin.— "Theuth," for ſo he calls him, "invented "letters, diſtinguiſhed vowels from conſo- "nants, and mutes from liquids, a diſcovery "which ſhould make him regarded as a god, "or a divine man. Fame ſays he lived in "Egypt." Amid this incertitude, the moſt prudent method will be to faithfully cite, and impartially examine, paſſages from the antients.

Thoth was differently named by different people. "The Greeks, ſays Philo of Biblos, "(q) gave the name of Hermes, or Mer- "cury, to Taaout, whom the Egyptians "call Thoith, and the Alexandrians Thoth." Hiſtorians agree in attributing to him the invention of moſt arts. "Thoth lived in the "remoteſt ages, and, though a man, poſ-

(q) Euſeb. Præp. Evan. lib. 1.

"ſeſſed

" ſeſſed all ſciences, which obtained him the " ſurname of Triſmegiſtus, thrice great " *(r)*." He divided diſcourſes into ſeveral parts *(s)*, firſt named many things, invented numbers *(t)*, and meaſures, and formed arithmetic into a ſyſtem *(u)*. The Egyptians ſay he taught them geometry, a ſcience abſolutely neceſſary to them, aſtronomy, and aſtrology; and add that, having obſerved the nature and harmony of ſounds, he formed the lyre. Clemens Alexandrinus (*x*) mentions the code of laws, confided to the guard of the prieſts, and Ælian deſcribes it under the denomination of the Code of Mercury (Thoth). The creation of theology, the eſtabliſhment of religious worſhip, and the order of ſacrifices are alſo attributed to him (*y*). This doctrine was contained in the books of Mercury, depoſited in the temples, where the prieſts found all that

(*r*) Lactantius, lib. 1.

(*s*) Diodorus, Plato, and Euſebius, affirm he invented letters, and firſt wrote books.

(*t*) Plato in Phædro.

(*u*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

(*x*) Stroma. 6. Cicero (de Natura Deorum) and Lactantius ſay he gave laws to the Egyptians.

(*y*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

related

related to religion. Diodorus farther adds the Egyptians affirmed arts, ſciences, and inſtitutions were invented by Thoth, or Mercury.

If we reflect on the nature of the mind, which ſlowly proceeds from truth to truth, and examine the annals of hiſtory, we find but a ſmall number, who poſſeſs creative genius, exiſting from time to time on the earth, and announcing to man ſome few important diſcoveries. Plato, an enlightened judge, ſimply conſidering Thoth as the inventor of letters and writing, called him a god, or a divine man; we are therefore obliged to think this perſonage, on whom univerſal knowledge is beſtowed, never had exiſtence; but that the learned of a nation which ſeems to have approached the origin of mankind have publiſhed, in his name, the knowledge they had acquired, during thouſands and thouſands of years. This reaſonable ſuppoſition is confirmed by the authority of many great men. Iamblichus, in his Egyptian Myſteries, makes Abamon, a prieſt of Egypt, ſpeak thus; "We rightly regard Mercury, the god of "eloquence, as the common deity of prieſts; "for it is the ſame mind which preſides over

"the

" the true ſcience of religion, therefore, our " anceſtors, dedicating their works, the " fruits of their wiſdom, to him, adorned " them with the name of Mercury."

Theſe Egyptian books were publiſhed under the name of Thoth, or Mercury. Galen, who learned ſcience in the academy of Alexandria, teaches us how this was practiſed. " All diſcoveries, made in Egypt, muſt be " marked by the ſeal of the approbation of " the learned; they were then engraved on " the columns *(z)*, without the author's " name, and depoſited in the ſanctuaries. " Hence the prodigious number of books at- " tributed to Mercury. The diſciples of Py- " thagoras, imitating this example, put the " name of Pythagoras at the head of their " works."

Theſe paſſages prove Thoth was not a man, but that works, obtaining the approbation of the prieſts colleges, were engraved on columns called Thoth *(a)*, as we ſhall preſently

(z) Galen contra Julian. lib. 1.

(a) Uſually called columns of Thoth; but Galen, knowing this Egyptian word ſignified column, would not commit a pleonaſm.

ſee,

ſee, to which they gave this general denomination. The ſpirit by which the learned declared themſelves inſpired, and to which they paid homage for their knowledge, was Phtha, the artiſt of nature, and ſource of information. "The Egyptians *(b)* affirm that Vulcan "*(c)* taught them the principles of philoſo- "phy, and that their pontifs and prophets "beſtowed on themſelves the title of his "prieſts." Thus, in the criticiſms of Scaliger, Vulcan is called the Legiſlator of Egypt.

Theſe columns, on which the diſcoveries worthy to be tranſmitted to poſterity were engraved, deſerve to be examined. "Mercury "*(d)* invented myſterious columns (Στηλαι) "and commanded they ſhould inſcribe on "them the laws by which the ſtars moved." "——The Egyptians were the firſt who "meaſured the heavens and earth, and tranſ- "mitted this knowledge to their deſcendants "by engraving it on columns" (*e*). Proclus

(*b*) Diogenes Laertius.
(*c*) The ſame as Phtha.
(*d*) Manetho, lib. 5.
(*e*) Achilles Tatius, Comment. in Aratum.

(*f*) adds, they alſo inſcribed remarkable actions, and intereſting inventions. Theſe ſtones, extremely hard, compoſed an immortal book, a kind of Cyclopædia, which included all arts and ſciences, invented, or made perfect, in paſt ages; wherefore the prieſts undertook nothing till they had firſt conſulted them (*g*). Pythagoras and Plato read them, and thence obtained the rudiments of their philoſophy. Theophilus of Antioch (*h*) aſks, "To what purpoſe has Pythagoras penetrated the Egyptian ſanctuaries, and conſulted the columns of Mercury?" Sanchoniathon (*i*), the moſt ancient hiſtorian, except Moſes, vaunts of having obtained his information from the monuments of the temples of Taaout, and in the myſterious books of the Ammonians.

The cuſtom of making marble, and its durable characters, the book of ſcience, is almoſt as ancient as the world. We have reaſon to believe this book was the firſt men ever read. "The patriarch Seth, knowing

(*f*) In Timæum, lib. 1.
(*g*) Iamblichus de Myſteriis, Egypt.
(*h*) Lib. 3.
(*i*) Apud. Euſeb. Præp. Evan. lib. 1.

"Adam

" Adam had predicted all that earth contains " ſhould periſh, either by conflagration or " univerſal deluge; and fearing philoſophy " and aſtronomy would be loſt to man, and " buried in forgetfulneſs, engraved his know- " ledge on two columns, the one of brick, " the other of ſtone, that ſhould the waters " deſtroy the firſt, the latter might remain, " and teach men aſtronomical diſcoveries. " This column is ſtill to be ſeen in the Siri- " adic land." (*k*)

Let us hear what Manetho ſays, the famous hiſtorian, and ſacred Egyptian writer, who lived more than three centuries before Joſephus. He affirms (*l*) " that he obtained " his knowledge from the pillars (Στηλαι) " in the Siriadic land, on which Thoth, the " firſt Mercury, had engraved it, in the ſa- " cred language and hieroglyphic characters; " whence the good genius, ſon of the ſecond " Mercury, had theſe characters tranſlated " into the dialect of the prieſts, and written " in ſacerdotal letters." Here, Sir, are two men, of two nations, who engrave their

(*k*) Antiq. Jud. lib. 1.

(*l*) Manetho, in his Sothis, dedicated to Ptolemy Philadelphus, vide Syncelli Chronographiam.

diſcoveries

diſcoveries on marble. I ſhall not examine whether Seth, as Jablonſki ſuppoſes (*m*), be the ſame as Thoth; or if Joſephus, poſterior to Manetho, wiſhed to transfer the honour of an act to the patriarch which the Egyptians had long attributed to themſelves. This is an enquiry of mere curioſity; the matter of moſt importance would be to prove, from authentic monuments, the exiſtence of theſe columns, and the place where. Both theſe hiſtorians call it the Siriadic land, a land as much unknown to the ancients as moderns; which has inclined ſeveral of the learned to imagine that, for Siriadic, we ought to read Siringic, which ſignifies ſubterranean alleys. This idea was, perhaps, ſuggeſted by the following paſſage. "It is "affirmed (*n*) that the Egyptian prieſts, in- "ſtructed in all that concerned religion, on "the approach of the deluge, feared leſt divine "worſhip would be effaced from the memory "of man. To preſerve it, therefore, they dug, "at a vaſt expence, and in various parts of "the kingdom, ſubterranean winding paſ-

(*m*) Panth. Egypt. lib. 3. cap. 20.
(*n*) Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. 22.

" ſages, in the walls of which they engraved
" their knowledge, under the forms of various
" animals, and birds, called by them hiero-
" glyphics, and which are unintelligible to
" the Latins."

This writer, it ſeems, has decided the queſtion; and by the Siriadic land muſt be underſtood the ſubterranean canals dug in the rocks round Thebes and Memphis. In the immenſe labyrinths, beneath the plain of Saccara, are vaſt numbers of the figures of men, birds, and animals, ſculptured in the walls; like hieroglyphicks are found in the numerous caverns of the mountains near Thebes, among which ſacred characters, ſome are painted, ſome engraved, and ſome in baſſo relievo, divided into compartments, or columns. Are not theſe the ſanctuaries which the prieſts alone might enter, and where they confided to ſtone hiſtorical events, the wonders of art, and the inventions of ſcience? I know the Scholiaſt on Sophocles (o) pretends the columns (Στηλαι) on which

(o) In Electram.

theſe

theſe memorable things were inſcribed (*) were ſquare ſtones: ſo they were, perhaps, in Greece; but obeliſks, columns, and the walls of temples and caverns, in which were innumerable hieroglyphics, divided into compartments, were the Στηλαι of the Egyptians, as Sanchoniathon, Manetho, and the moſt ancient authors atteſt. The monuments deſcribed by Ammianus Marcellinus ſtill remain, and the traveller beholds them with barren admiration, as the firſt efforts of human genius to render its labours immortal.

But the teſtimony of authors will not be ſufficient, Sir, to perſuade us theſe hieroglyphics were anterior to the deluge, the truth or falſhood of which can only be ſatisfactorily proved by underſtanding and reading them. There is little doubt but they would inform us when they were engraved, and give the hiſtory of the firſt ages of the world; at leaſt, we may reaſonably conclude theſe characters preceded writing, and are the moſt an-

* It ſeems ſtrange the Author ſhould ſuppoſe the inſcriptions on the columns here meant, which were merely the boundaries, or goal, of a chariot courſe, could have any relation to the hieroglyphic learning of the Egyptians. T.

cient mode of conveying knowledge that has deſcended to theſe ages.

This vaunted perſonage, Thoth, is then demonſtrated never to have exiſted; but that the Egyptian prieſts publiſhed their works under that general title, when honoured by the unanimous ſuffrages of the colleges. The interpretation of the word renders this undoubted. Jablonſki *(p)* has proved that Thoth ſignified column. The Greeks tranſlating the word by that of Στηλη have preſerved its ſignification. Since the learned of Egypt were accuſtomed to write their books without adding their name, it was natural they ſhould take that of the monuments which were to tranſmit them to poſterity. It even ſhould ſeem this honour was granted only to thoſe who made important diſcoveries, ſince, to obtain it, the approbation of all the academicians of the nation was requiſite. Thus when the Latins, and others, who have no profound knowledge in Egyptian hiſtory, ſpeak of the *columns* of *Thoth*, they commit the ſame pleonaſm as thoſe geo-

(p) Jablonſki Tom. III. Thoth, Theuth, or Thoith, come from the Egyptian Theuothi, column.

graphers

graphers who call Ætna Mount Gibel (*q*) Obſerve, I entreat you, Sir, that Sanchoniathon, Manetho, Galen, and the writers who were inſtructed in the myſteries of Egypt, and went to the ſource of knowledge, do not commit this fault, and only ſay they engraved on columns, or Στηλαι, remarkable events, and the marvellous works of art. Thus when, according to Ælian (*r*), the prieſts affirmed Seſoſtris had been inſtructed in the ſciences by Thoth, or Mercury, it ſignified that when initiated they taught him to read the hiſtory of human learning, inſcribed on columns, in hieroglyphics. They firſt bore the ſimple title of Thoth, but the cuſtom of conſulting them, the ſacred places in which they were preſerved, and the knowledge they contained, rendered them reſpectable. They were conſecrated by religion, and placed under the immediate protection of Phtha, or the creative ſpirit.

Theſe principles eſtabliſhed, we may explain, with probability, the three Thoths, or Mercuries, enumerated by the Egyptians,

(*q*) Gibel, in Arabic, ſignifies mountain.
(*r*) Lib. 12.

the one before, and the two others after, the deluge. The firſt indicated the infancy of human knowledge; either becauſe ſome monuments had eſcaped the deſtruction of men, or that thoſe they ſoon after raiſed contained knowledge appertaining to times anterior to that dreadful æra. The ſecond Thoth denotes the efforts of the Egyptians in the diſcovery of phyſical and aſtronomical truths, the tranſlation of the hieroglyphics into ſacerdotal characters, and the eſtabliſhment of laws and religion. The third was the flouriſhing ſtate of ſcience, the progreſs of the arts, and the perfection to which they were carried; as the obeliſks, temples, and pyramids atteſt, the grandeur and magnificence of which no nation has equalled. Theſe æras the Egyptian prieſts clearly deſcribed by the epithet Triſmegiſtus, thrice great, which they gave to their allegoric Thoth.

Thus, Sir, you have ſeen the books of Thoth, or Hermes, were a collection of the productions of the literati of Egypt, and formed their Cyclopedia. Theſe periſhed in the conflagration of the Ptolemæan library, and the originals, which remain engraved,

in a thouſand places, in Egyptian marble, are unintelligible. Of all the treaſures of antient learning we poſſeſs only a few pearls: As to the Hermetic books, ſo vaunted by thoſe who loſe their time and ſubſtance in ſearch of the philoſopher's ſtone, they are imaginary works, falſely attributed to Hermes, or the Egyptian Thoth.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXXVIII.

OF THE VOCAL STATUE.

The ſtatue of Memnon anciently famous for the ſound it gave, at ſun-riſing: called by the prieſts ſon of the day. Homer celebrates the ſon of Aurora, the conqueror of Antilochus, which his commentators, and ſucceeding poets, erroneouſly apply to the Egyptian Memnon. The ſtatue of Thebes was named Amenophis. Memnon, who was at the ſiege of Troy much later, was ſent from Suſa, by Teutam, Emperor of Aſſyria. The vocal ſtatue broken by Cambyſes, and the trunk, after long ceaſing to ſound, began again, under the Ptolemies; pronounced the ſeven vowels, before its fall. The reaſon given why the prieſts called this ſtatue the image of the ſun, and the couſin of Oſiris, and the derivation of its name, Amenophis.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I BRIEFLY mentioned the ſtatue of Memnon, Sir, when deſcribing the ruins of Thebes; but, the great names engraved on the pedeſtal pleading in favour of the wonders

wonders related of it, I cannot conclude theſe letters without endeavouring to diſcover, amid the darkneſs of time, ſome traces of its hiſtory, celebrated by a few Egyptian, and a hundred Greek and Latin, authors, whoſe opinions often differ, and ſome of which bear the marks of blind credulity. Others, more ſage, unable to diſbelieve their ſenſes, or give faith to miracles, have remained in doubt. I will faithfully cite their words, and, by comparing them, you will form ſome judgment of a ſtatue ſo celebrated in antiquity.

Among the ruins of Thebes we remarked many coloſſal ſtatues, moſt of them thrown down, or mutilated. The greateſt was at the entrance of the veſtibules of the tomb I deſcribed, named Oſymandyas by Diodorus *(s)*, and, according to Strabo *(t)*, Iſmandes by the Egyptians. A multitude of writers, however, have called it Memnon (*u*). This ſtatue, leſs marvellous for its

(*s*) Diod. lib. 1.

(*t*) Lib. 17.

(*u*) Oſymandyas and Iſmandes were probably its vulgar name among the Egyptians. The words are derived from Ou

its gigantic ſize, and the hardneſs of its granite, than for the property it poſſeſſed of yielding a ſound at ſun-riſe, was broken by Cambyſes. One half was thrown down, the other part remains on its baſe. "The "ſtatue of Memnon (*x*), repreſented a man "in the bloom of youth, with his face "toward the riſing ſun, and, when firſt "ſhone on by its rays, it was ſaid to "ſpeak."——"Thebes, famous for its "hundred gates, and the vocal ſtatue of "Memnon, which greets Aurora, his mo-"ther, when ſhe riſes" (*y*). The prieſts of Egypt called him ſon of the day (*z*), and according to Diodorus, the couſin of Oſiris. Homer firſt ſpoke of the ſon of Aurora. "Neſtor cheriſhed in his heart the remem-"brance of his generous Antilochus, ſlain

Ou Smandi, to yield a ſound. Memnon, alſo, may come from Emnoni, of ſtone, whence the Greeks have formed Memnon Iſmandes. Vide Jablonſki de Memnone.

(*x*) Philoſtratus in Vitâ Apollonii Tyanæi. lib. 6.

(*y*) Dionyſ. Perieget. Orbis Deſcriptio.

(*z*) In the ancient Egyptian tongue Eho is day, whence the Greeks have formed Ἠώς, Aurora, and called Memnon, her ſon. Jablons. de Memnone.

"by

" by the illuſtrious ſon of Aurora" (*a*). His Commentators have all thought this paſſage related to the Egyptian Memnon; but the poet might ſignify by this one of the chiefs who came, from the Eaſt, to the aid of Troy. It was a metaphoric language familiar in his time; the ſcripture uſes it when it calls the people of thoſe climates children of the Eaſt. Succeeding Poets differently explained his thought. Aurora, ſays Heſiod, in his Theogony, had by Tithon the valiant Memnon, who bore a brazen helmet, and was king of Ethiopia. " The brave Antilochus (*b*), " magnanimous of ſoul, deſirous to ſave his " father's life, fell beneath Memnon, the " chief of an Ethiopian army (*c*): one of " the horſes of Neſtor, tranſpierced by a ja- " velin Paris threw, ſtopped his car." The

(*a*) Odyſſey.

(*b*) Pindar. Od. II.

(*c*) Theſe paſſages relate to the Egyptian Memnon. The Greeks long called the Delta Egypt, and all the country farther South Ethiopia. Homer makes Menelaus ſpeak thus to Telemachus, " I went up Egypt as far as Ethiopia;" and, as he takes his Hero only to Thebes, he evidently meant the Thebais. Damis, the companion of Apollonius Thyanæus, declares he ſaw the Temple and ſtatue of Memnon in Ethiopia, that is to ſay in Upper Egypt.

Greek

Greek and Latin poets, ſupported by theſe authorities, confound the Trojan and Egyptian Memnon. Virgil (*d*) ſpeaks of the troops of Aurora, and the arms of the black Memnon. This colour, meant to denote the hero's country, muſt not be regarded as a ſign of deformity, for Homer, celebrating Eurypilus, calls him the moſt beauteous of mortals, except the divine Memnon (*e*). "Aurora, who had favoured the Trojans, was "no longer moved by the miſeries of Ilium, "nor of Hecuba. Affliction more deep invaded her heart, ſhe wept her own woes, "and lamented the death of Memnon *(f)*." On the baſe of the ſtatue was the following epigram, written by the poet Aſclepiodotus. "Joy to Thetis, goddeſs of the ſea! Know "that Memnon, who died fighting under "the Trojan ramparts, daily utters a ſweet "ſound, near the tombs, dug in the Lybian "mounts, where the impetuous Nile divides "Thebes, famous for its gates; while Achilles, inſatiable in battle, ſpeaks not near

(*d*) Æneid. lib. 1.
(*e*) Odyſſ. lib. 5.
(*f*) Ovid. Metam. lib. 13.

" the walls of Ilium, nor in Theſſalian " ſong."

Thus, Sir, the Memnon of Egypt, or Ethiopia, for ſo the ancients called the Thebais, was generally ſuppoſed the ſame who periſhed, gloriouſly warring with the Greeks; but theſe are the teſtimonies of poets, who were more deſirous to give us affecting tales, and brilliant fictions, than hiſtorical truths. Continue we to examine the fables invented concerning his origin. Aurora (*g*), in love with Tithon, carried him into Ethiopia, and had by him Emathion and Memnon. Iſacius Tzetzes adopts the ſame allegory. " Tithon, " ſon of Laomedon, was beloved by the god- " deſs of day, of whom were born Memnon " and Emathion." Diodorus explains this paſſage thus (*h*). " Tithon, ſon of Lao- " medon, and brother of Priam, led his ar- " mies into the Eaſtern countries of Aſia, as " far as Ethiopia, whence aroſe the fable of " Memnon, born of Aurora."

But who is this hero, who aided the Trojans? For the fables of the poets always have

(*g*) Apollodori Biblioth. lib. 3. cap. 11.
(*h*) Lib. 4.

ſome

ſome foundation in truth. Diodorus will inform us. "Memnon came (i) to the ſuccour of Troy, leading the armies of Teutam, Emperor of Aſſyria, whoſe aſſiſtance Priam, ſovereign of the kingdom of Troy, dependant on that emperor, had implored. Teutam ſent him twenty thouſand men, Ethiopians and Suſians; and two hundred cars, commanded by Memnon. This warrior, beloved by the emperor, and then governor of Perſia, was in the prime of manhood, and famous for his ſtrength of body and mind. He had built a palace in the city of Suſa, which bore his name till the reign of the Perſians, and the public way, ſtill called the Memnonian road." Strabo adds (k) that Tithon, the father of Memnon, founded Suſa, which was a hundred and twenty ſtadia in circumference, of an oblong form, and its citadel was called Memnonium, the citadel of Memnon. Herodotus, alſo (l), calls Suſa the city of Memnon, and Pauſanias (m) affirms this general came to the

(i) Diod. Sic. lib. 2.
(k) Lib. 15.
(l) Lib. 5.
(m) In Phocicis, cap. 31.

ſiege

ſiege of Troy from Suſa, not from Ethiopia, and that he had ſubjected all the Median nations to the river Choaſpes.

Theſe authorities, the number of which I might augment, were it neceſſary, evidently prove that, during the memorable ſiege whoſe heroes are made immortal by the genius of one man, the Aſſyrian emperor ſent a brave general to aid Priam, named Memnon, who had no relation to the Memnon of Egypt (*n*). It is probable, as I have already ſaid, Homer, calling him the ſon of Aurora, only meant to ſignify the Eaſt, whence he came. After poets invented the fable we have recited to adorn their verſes.

Let us now examine the real name of the ſtatue which is the ſubject of our enquiries, the opinion the ancients had of it, and the intention of the prieſts in erecting it. Herodotus is the firſt who calls it Memnon, and he but juſt mentions it, becauſe it had lately been mutilated when he viſited Egypt. A multitude of travellers ſince him have ſpoken of it

(*n*) Philoſtratus affirms Memnon was from Ethiopia, (*i. e.* the Thebais) where he reigned before the Trojan war. The Memnon of that ſiege is greatly poſterior to, and different from, the former. Vita Apollonii Thyanæi.

with

with enthuſiaſm, and generally agree in giving it the name of Memnon, which only proves this denomination had been adopted by foreigners. But to obtain truth we muſt hear the Egyptians, who beſt ought to underſtand their own monuments. The Alexandrian Chronicle contains the following paſſage.— "Cambyſes commanded they ſhould cut "Amenophis through the middle, the vocal "ſtatue, vulgarly called Memnon".—— "The people of the Thebais affirm the ſtatue "we call Memnon is that of the Egyptian "Phamenophis (*o*)". The *Ph*, in their language, was the maſculine article (*p*), and the true name, therefore, was Amenophis. When Cambyſes had broken the ſtatue, it, probably, long ceaſed to ſound; or Herodotus, who travelled Egypt not long after the Perſian conqueſt, would not have forgotten a fact ſo extraordinary. The Ptolemies, having founded a kingdom in Egypt, favoured arts and ſciences, and the ſtatue, placed on its baſe, then continued to be heard, as Manetho

(*o*) Pauſanius in Atticis.
(*p*) Jablonſki de Memnone.

reports

reports (*q*) but not in ſo diſtinct a manner as formerly. The Romans conquered Egypt, three centuries after, and eagerly went to admire its antiquities; among them was Germanicus—"Who could not reſiſt (*r*) his deſire to behold the miracles of Egypt, the moſt aſtoniſhing of which is the ſtone ſtatue of Memnon, that, on the moment the firſt beams of the ſun ſhine upon it, pronounces vowels *; and the pyramids, which riſe like mountains amid almoſt inacceſſible ſands." Numerous inſcriptions confirm the account of Tacitus, among which is the following, on the right leg of the ſtatue. *I, C. Lælia, wife of Africanus the Preſect, heard the voice of Memnon, at half after ſix in the morning, in the firſt year of the reign of Domitian, &c.*'——And this on its left leg. *I, Publius Balbinus, heard the divine voice of the vocal ſtatue of Memnon, otherwiſe Phamenoph, in company with the lovely Queen, Sabina, (the wife of Adrian). The*

(*q*) Syncelli Chronographia. Manetho was a ſacred writer of Egypt, under the firſt Ptolemy, and underſtood the hieroglyphic language.

(*r*) Tacit. Annal. lib. 2.

* Tacitus reads *vocalem ſonum reddens*. T.

ſun was in the firſt hour of its courſe, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Adrian.——Julia Camilla commanded me to engrave theſe words, at the inſtant Adrian the Auguſt heard the voice of Memnon. And, on the ſame ſide, *I, Mithridaticus, Tribune of the Twelfth Legion* (*), *heard the voice of Memnon, at ſix in the morning.*

A thouſand other inſcriptions, which it were uſeleſs to cite, atteſt the ſame fact; and, when to theſe authorities we add thoſe of Strabo and Tacitus, incredulity cannot reſiſt ſuch witneſſes. The marble, on which they have been preſerved ſixteen hundred years, is a durable book that depoſes in favour of the voice of Amenophis. But what muſt we hence conclude? Did the nature of the ſtone produce ſuch a phænomenon? So Pauſanias ſeems to think. " A ſtone *(s)*, " ſhown at Megara, yields, when ſtruck with " flint, a ſound which imitates the vibrations " of a ſtring on an inſtrument. The Coloſſus " I ſaw at Thebes, beyond the Nile, ſur-

* Read twenty ſecond——Vide Jablonſki and the inſcriptions in Pococke. T.

(s) In Atticis.

" prized me ſtill more: It daily produces, " at ſun-riſing, a ſound as powerful as the " ſtrings of a lyre which break when over- " ſtretched." Philoſtratus, fond of the marvellous, ſets no bounds to his credulity. " The ſtatue of Memnon *(t)*, though of " ſtone, was endowed with ſpeech. Joyous " at the ſight of his mother, he ſaluted her, " at ſun-riſing, with a gracious voice, and, " toward ſun-ſetting, expreſſed his grief for " her abſence, by a melancholy and mournful " ſound.—This marble, alſo, had the faculty " of ſhedding tears, at will; and Echo, it is " ſaid, replied to its voice, and perfectly " imitated its expreſſions of joy and grief." An ancient grammarian *(u)* ſays, this ſtatue was formed in ſo marvellous a manner that it ſaluted the King and the Sun.

Theſe paſſages will not lead us to believe marble might yield a ſound ſuch as has been attributed to Memnon. The empty ſarcophagus of the great chamber of the pyramid, I know, reſounded, in a very ſonorous manner,

(*t*) Vita Apollonii Tyanæi.

(*u*) Cited by Jablonſki: de Memnone.

that, before Cambyſes had broken the Coloſſus, it uttered the ſeven vowels. The following dialogue, written in Greek, on its left leg, is another proof.

Cambyſes mutilated me; I who, from marble, was formed into the Sun's image. I formerly poſſeſſed the melodious voice of Memnon. Cambyſes deprived me of thoſe accents by which I expreſſed my joy and grief.

What thou relateſt is moſt pitiable: thy voice is now obſcure, and unintelligible. Unhappy ſtatue! I deplore the misfortune by which thou art thus reduced.

The Egyptians held the Univerſe was created at the vernal equinox. "They ſay "(z) that, at the birth of nature, when the "ſtars began to move in ſpace, Aries was "in the middle of Heaven, the Moon in "Cancer, the Sun roſe with Leo, Mercury "with Virgo, Venus with Libra, Mars was "in Scorpio, Jupiter in Sagittarius, and "Saturn in Capricorn." Syncellus (a) found, in an old Egyptian Chronicle, that after a revolution of 36525 years the Zodiac would

(z) Macrob. Somn. Scipionis.
(a) Chronographia.

be

be in its firſt poſition; that is to ſay, that the firſt minute of the firſt degree of the equinoctial line would begin with the ſign Aries. I leave theſe things to the diſcuſſion of Aſtronomers, but they ſhew the vernal equinox, in Egypt, principally drew the attention of the learned and the people. Amoun, a ſymbolical deity, was conſecrated to it, and the feſtivals in his honour all related to that intereſting period. From this they dated their aſtronomical year; and in this, according to the prieſts, the ſeven planets would again begin their courſe, which they allegorically named celeſtial muſic. It was then, too, that Amenophis pronounced the ſeven vowels (ſymbols of the planets) which compoſed the terreſtrial muſic. Thus might this famous ſtatue, in ſacred language, be called the couſin of Oſiris *(b)*, and the image of the Sun *(c)*; ſince it imitated, on earth, the Sun's office in the Heavens. The prieſts, in making it repeat theſe ſeven ſounds, whence all languages have been formed, and which ſo marvellouſly paint our thoughts, were

(b) Diod. Sic.

(c) See the Dialogue above cited.

deſirous of making their moſt excellent diſcovery immortal; a diſcovery which, according to Plato, muſt either be invented by a divine man or a god. It is poſſible, alſo, that the ſhadow of this Coloſſus ſerved to indicate the moment of the equinox; ſo, at leaſt, we may be led to think from its name, formed from Ame nouphi *(d)*, teller of good tidings *(e)*. The Greeks adopted theſe ancient ideas when they attributed to Apollo (the Sun) the invention of the lyre and muſic. This allegory, which denoted the admirable harmony of the ſpheres, became obſcured by poetical fictions, and was no longer underſtood.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*d*) Jablonſki de Memnone.

(*e*) The Sun's arrival at the Equator promiſed the ceſſation of the ſouth wind, and the coming of the inundation, which occaſioned the Egyptians to obſerve it ſo carefully.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIX.

REFLECTIONS ON THE RELIGION OF EGYPT.

The Egyptians had but two religious dogmas, that of a creating deity, and the immortality of the ſoul; the reſt was all allegory, and this worſhip was preſerved pure within the temples. The neceſſity of uſing emblematic figures, before the invention of letters, inſenſibly led to their adoration, which happened when the eaſy method of writing occaſioned the ſenſe of the hieroglyphics to be forgotten. Conjecture concerning the gods of Laban.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

INDULGE me, Sir, in a few ſhort reflections on a religion whoſe myſteries I have interpreted. It contained but two eſtabliſhed principles, that of the Creator, an Infinite Spirit, and the Immortality of the Soul. The firſt is demonſtrated by the temples of Phtha, Neith,

Neith, and Cneph, conſecrated to the power, wiſdom, and goodneſs of the Supreme Being. The ſecond by the care with which bodies were embalmed, and the prayer recited at the death of an Egyptian. The temple of Cneph, in the iſland of Elephantina, may be regarded as the moſt ancient in Egypt; for, before the people deſcended into the valley, where the ſtagnant waters of the Nile formed impenetrable marſhes, till drained and rendered proper for agriculture by men's labours, according to Herodotus, they inhabited the mountains beſide the cataract. This monument, then, is a teſtimony their worſhip of the Creator preceded every other, and we may, even, ſafely affirm it was preſerved, in all its purity, among the prieſts; for men once, by the effort of reaſon, attaining the knowledge of one God, or receiving this knowledge by tradition, cannot, while forming an enlightened ſociety, fall back to idolatry, which always ſuppoſes profound ignorance.

All the remaining Egyptian theology was purely allegorical, which included the courſe of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, and the moſt remarkable phænomena of nature, each of which

which was perſonified in the ſacred language of the prieſts. But, far from adoring, they conſidered them only as admirable ſigns, in which the ſplendor of the moſt high was made manifeſt. This religion was, probably, ſo firſt taught, but inſenſibly corrupted, becauſe the vulgar, accuſtomed to ſee the ſymbolical figures I have mentioned, in the ſanctuary, and, when taken thence, at certain periods, to offer ſacrifices of thankſgiving to the creator, forgot the inviſible object of adoration in the emblem. But, wherefore did not the prieſts remove this blindneſs? Wherefore enſlave a nation by ſuch wretched ſuperſtition? It was not their intent, at firſt, no doubt; but the neceſſity of expreſſing themſelves by allegorical fables, before the invention of letters, and keeping them in the temples, accuſtomed the people to hold them ſacred. When writing became familiar, and they had wholly forgotten their firſt ſignification, they no longer preſcribed bounds to their veneration, but actually worſhipped ſymbols which their anceſtors had only honoured. Oſiris and Iſis became the tutelar deities of Egypt; Serapis preſided over the inundation; Apis

Apis preſaged abundance; and the evil genius Typhon menaced deſtructive ills. Deeply impreſſed on their minds, it was difficult to eraſe theſe ideas without overthrowing the eſtabliſhed religion. It may be, too, for men were ever the ſame, the prieſts adroitly profited by this ignorance, to make themſelves mediators between heaven and earth, and the diſpenſers of the divine will: yet we ought to be circumſpect in preſuming to judge a body of the learned, who publiſhed the wiſe laws that Athens profited by, and raiſed ſo great a number of uſeful and durable monuments, when we reflect that the Hebrews, though kept ſeparate from the Egyptians, and in the ancient faith of Abraham, by their leaders, and prophets, no ſooner came to the deſert, than, profiting by the abſence of Moſes, who waited on the mountain to receive the commandments, they forced Aaron to caſt them a golden calf for a god. So true is it that ſenſible objects have more power over the multitude than all the precepts of wiſdom. Reaſoning impartially, we muſt perceive it is equally difficult and dangerous to ſhew mankind the truth. The greateſt philoſophers

philoſophers of Greece and Rome, as well as the Egyptian prieſts, acknowledged only one God. Mythology to them was a chain of allegories, veiling phyſical effects, and natural cauſes; yet they bowed before the ſtatues of Jupiter, Pallas, and Venus. Socrates, alone, had the fortitude to exclaim againſt theſe fabulous deities, and Socrates was obliged to ſwallow poiſon. If you wiſh to recollect a more recent example of the danger of enlightening the world, remember Galileo, who, after having been obliged to aſk pardon on his knees for daring to ſpeak the truth, and announce a moſt important diſcovery, was perſecuted the remainder of his life, and died in exile. Heroic as it is to die a martyr in ſuch a caſe, there are few minds capable of this heroiſm.

Theſe facts, and many others I might cite, prove that, though the Egyptian prieſts were culpable for concealing the light from the people they ſhould have inſtructed, we muſt not condemn them with too much rigour; for, in theſe diſtant ages, when they ſpoke but by types, idolatry took rapid ſtrides, and it was ſcarcely poſſible in deſtroying it

not

not to deſtroy religion. The gods of Laban, which Rebecca ſtole, were hieroglyphics, the ſignification of which was probably loſt to Laban, and he adored theſe images becauſe they deſcended to him from his forefathers. The ſame thing happened in Egypt, where hieroglyphics became the divinities of the people, when they could no longer comprehend their meaning. There was but one way to extinguiſh ſuperſtition, and this muſt have been by the deſtruction of theſe hieroglyphics; but this ſacrifice would have robbed the prieſts of their knowledge, and of the abſolute empire they exerciſed over the mind. There are individuals ſufficiently generous to renounce the ſeductive charms of power, from pure motives of benevolence, but no body of men was ever capable of an effort ſo ſublime.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XL.

REMARKS ON THE HIEROGLYPHICS.

Hieroglyphics the first written language; more ancient than the deluge; their meaning lost, under the monarchs of the lower empire; and might, perhaps, be recovered by a perfect knowledge of the Coptic, or by a journey to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, where an Egyptian colony settled, and where, it is probable, the ancient language, books, and interpretation of the hieroglyphics, are preserved.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

HIEROGLYPHICS, Sir, formed the first written language of men, and are imitative and allegorical characters, differing from letters, because, one paints the thoughts by marks and sounds, and the other by figures only. Their antiquity approaches the time of the deluge; and, perhaps, precedes it; for

for before that event men poſſeſſed arts and ſciences, and, as they engraved on ſtone, ſome of thoſe monuments might have eſcaped the general deſtruction.

Clemens Alexandrinus enumerates a great number of books attributed to Thoth, that is to ſay, approved by the academies, and publiſhed under this name; and even cites ſeveral of them. The firſt, ſaid he, contained ſacred hymns, the ſecond rules for kings; the four following treated of aſtronomy, and the obſervations of the Egyptians. Ten others contained the ſcience of hieroglyphics, geography, and coſmography. A like number included the code of laws, religion, and holy diſcipline; and the ſix laſt were a compleat treatiſe on phyſic. Theſe works have undergone the fate of ſo many others. A Barbarian, whoſe name poſterity muſt deteſt, uſed them, for ſix months, to heat the baths of Alexandria. But moſt of theſe Egyptian books were only copies; the originals remain ſculptured in a thouſand places, on obeliſks, and the walls of temples and caverns, and theſe are what the learned of all nations ought to endeavour to read. Manetho, high prieſt, and ſacred writer, among the Egyp-

tians, thence collected the hiſtory he wrote, under the Ptolomies. About three centuries after, Hermapion interpreted the obeliſk of Heliopolis, tranſported to Rome by Auguſtus; ſince whom no author has underſtood the hieroglyphics, or none whoſe works have deſcended to us. Ammianus Marcellinus, who lived in the reign of Julian, affirms theſe characters were then unintelligible to the Latins. Are any means left of rending away the veil with which time has covered them, and explaining the facts they contain? He who ſhould effect this would acquire immortal glory, by reſtoring to arts, ſciences, and hiſtory, ſo many diſcoveries, loſt to the world. Though I make no pretenſions to this moſt arduous taſk, I will recapitulate ſome ideas, to which the ſtudy of the ancients, and a reiterated view of the monuments of Egypt, gave birth.

The prieſts are known to be the inventors of the letters called ſacerdotal, with which they tranſlated the hieroglyphics. Theſe were univerſally uſed in the temples, and with them all that related to religion and ſcience was written. This was an interme-

diate dialect between the hieroglyphics and the vulgar tongue, which letter, happily, is not loſt; it exiſts in Coptic books, with Greek and Arabic tranſlations, and is found in a great number of manuſcripts, ſcattered over Egypt, and in the libraries of Europe. To attain a knowledge of this ſacerdotal dialect, alphabets muſt either be found, or paſſages common to both languages. On the walls of the temples, and caverns, among the hieroglyphics, are letters which differ from any known; and which, probably, were a part of the ſacerdotal dialect. Theſe are the characters that ought to be ſtudied, as containing a key to the hieroglyphics, which they are either a continuation or interpretation of. Perhaps, a man of learning, perfectly acquainted with the Coptic, Arabic, and Hebrew, who ſhould dedicate ſeveral years to this ſtudy, among the monuments of ancient Egypt, would accompliſh an enterpriſe ſo noble.

Another reflection has particularly ſtruck me, during my travels in this country. The Ammonians were an Egyptian colony; and the prieſts who rendered Jupiter Ammon famous

had

had the ſame religion, the ſame information, as thoſe of Egypt. Their god no longer utters oracles, but his temple may ſtill ſubſiſt. The ſurrounding country, being very fertile, ſhould be inhabited; and this people, having undergone no revolutions, which have ſo often changed Egypt during more than two thouſand years, muſt have preſerved their cuſtoms, worſhip, and mother tongue. The love of fame no longer inciting them to the ſtudy of arts and ſciences, theſe are probably loſt; but they may have been kept in memory by tradition. Sanchoniathon affirms he gained his information from the monuments of Egypt, and the books of the Ammonians, which books ſtill ſhould remain in the country that gave them birth; and, perhaps, in the ſanctuary of this antique temple, defended by deſerts ſo vaſt. Hither, then, might a man of learning direct his footſteps, with a hope of ſucceſs. The road is ſtrewed with dangers. Alexander, with numerous attendants, and camels loaded with water and proviſions, was near periſhing in the attempt. One of the armies of Cambyſes was buried under the ſands, and not a

ſoldier eſcaped to reviſit his native country. But what will not the fortitude of a man, guided by the light, and inflamed with the love of ſcience, undertake? Till ſome erudite European has viſited the temple of Ammon, and informed enlightened nations what are its treaſures, and what its remains, it will be natural to ſuppoſe an Egyptian colony reſides in its neighbourhood, and that this colony has preſerved its native tongue, and the interpretation of hieroglyphics. I am further led to believe this colony exiſts, becauſe the Oaſes I have traced on the map are ſtill inhabited, and the Bey of Girga ſends a Cachef to govern the one which is neareſt to that city. A traveller who ſhould dare to traverſe the deſerts which divide them from the banks of the Nile, would find monuments infinitely curious, and, hitherto, unknown.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XLI.

PLAN OF AN INTERESTING JOURNEY NEVER YET PERFORMED.

To examine the great lake Menzala, and the ruins to be found in its Iſles; viſit Peluſium, Farama, and the Oaſes; ſtay at Syene, to obſerve the ſolſtitial well; traverſe Yemen, and collect knowledge and manuſcripts; remain at Mecca, during the pilgrimage; and, bearing from that city, and from Medina, works, and information, unknown in Europe, travel Arabia Petræa, and Deſerta, and make ſome ſtay at Damaſcus, and depart from thence to Europe.

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

MANY curious things remain to be verified in Egypt, and the following are propoſitions offered to whoever deſire to render themſelves uſeful in arts and ſciences, and acquire ſuch precious information as ſhall honour their country.

The great lake Menzala ſhould be examined; its outlets into the Mediterranean ſounded; the Iſle of Tanis landed at; where, according to the Arabian writers, and the natives, grand ruins, and antique marbles, are to be found. The voyage ſhould be continued to the extremity of the lake, and the remains of Peluſium, and Farama, viſited, where the Arabian geographers deſcribe a tomb which ſhould be that of Pompey the Great.

The traveller ſhould deſcend the canal of Sebennytus, now Semennoud, to the lake Bourlos, and examine the ruins of ancient Butis, where Herodotus places the ſanctuary of Latona, hewn from one aſtoniſhing block of granite, which I have deſcribed, after that hiſtorian.

The remains of Naucratis, and Sais, near Faoua; and thoſe of Phacuſa, and Bubaſtus, by which the famous canal of the Ptolemies paſſed, ſhould be ſearched.

A tribe of wandering Arabs ſhould be treated with, that he might proceed to the Oaſis of Ammon, not far from the lake Mœris, and from thence to the emple of Jupiter

Jupiter Ammon, ſo famous in antiquity, and where the ancient language of Egypt might be hoped to be recovered; and, perhaps, books which might ſerve to interpret the hieroglyphics.

The three Oaſes ſhould be viſited, and the people, and the monuments, they contain, now loſt to the world, deſcribed.

A ſtay of eight or ten days ſhould be made at Syene, to diſcover the Solſtitial well, and verify the admirable obſervation of the ancient Egyptian prieſts, who when the ſun arrived at the tropic ſaw his entire image, at noon, in the water, at the bottom of this aſtronomical well.

No European, for theſe eighteen hundred years, has travelled the places I have mentioned, or verified the facts. Such diſcoveries require a man well acquainted with antiquity, and perfectly inſtructed in the manners religion, and language of the Arabs; nor need ſuch a man end his travels here: he might paſs the red ſea, as a Mahometan merchant, viſit all its ports, reſt ſome months at Moka, where he would find rare manuſcripts; go to Sannaa, the ancient capital of the kings of the Homeritæ, who governed Yemen, in

the time of the Ptolemies, examine this rich country, and, joining the caravan, repair to Mecca. Here he might remain under the pretence of religion and trade, examine the library begun long before Mahomet, buy the ſcarceſt manuſcripts, or have them copied, and, after having obſerved the religion, commerce, and buildings in that city, as ancient as Iſhmael, he might depart with the caravan of Damaſcus, and repoſe, after his fatigue, in that beautiful capital of Syria, where he might alſo procure a great number of uncommon books, &c. &c.

Whoever could ſucceed in ſuch a voyage, the pains and perils of which are innumerable, might afford Europe a hiſtory, abſolutely new, concerning the nations of Arabia; the interior parts of which are as little known as the foreſts of New Zealand. Numerous intereſting diſcoveries might be added to natural hiſtory, and geography, and, perhaps, he would have the happineſs to reſtore to Tacitus, Livy, and Diodorus Siculus thoſe parts of their immortal works which are loſt; for they were tranſlated by the Arabs.

When I had finiſhed my tranſlation of the Koran, and the life of Mahomet, full of enthuſiaſm

enthuſiaſm for ſcience, this was the plan I then propoſed to myſelf. Obſtacles occurred, which prevented its execution, and gave me much chagrin: but the laws of neceſſity muſt be obeyed. I have ſince abandoned my project, and, now, confeſs I want courage to undertake it, becauſe, from experience, I know the dangers that muſt be encountered; and, becauſe, after five years abode in my native country, to the climate of which I am once more accuſtomed, my health might not, a ſecond time, perhaps, ſupport the devouring heats of Africa and Arabia. Yet let me hope ſome European, thirſting for fame, and more rich, or more favoured, than I am, will gain immortality by collecting the information and manuſcripts I have deſcribed; and, particularly, by acquiring for more enlightened nations the unknown hiſtory of the people of Yemen, Mecca, Medina, and the interior parts of Arabia.

Such is the information which five years travels over the Eaſt, and the ſtudy of the antients, have procured me. You, Sir, who, from that charming retreat which your labours and knowledge have enriched with the

rareſt plants the world contains, and a multitude of ſcarce books, have ſupplied me with the neceſſary leiſure to collect, and arrange, theſe letters, publiſhed under the auſpices of an auguſt prince, who honours you with his eſteem; may you find pleaſure in reading them, and accept them as a teſtimony of gratitude.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your very reſpectful,

Humble ſervant,

SAVARY.

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THE END.

ERRATA.

Vol. I. 105, l. 4, for Hadgi, read Hadge.
189, l. 64, *et alibi paſſim*, for Cheik, read Sheik.
275, for Charakhania, read Sharakania.
Vol. II. 383, l. 17, for Nicopolis, read Nilopolis.

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